

THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF ISLAM IN AMERICA

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

September 16, 2002

FALLOUT

*The Hidden
Environmental
Consequences
of 9/11*

By Juan Gonzalez

*Rescuing
Ground Zero
from the
Developers*

By Sandy Zipp



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Editorial

No Laughing Matter

As the anniversary of 9/11 approaches, the nation will begin to commemorate the thousands killed in the attacks. Less attention will be paid to the other casualties in the war on terrorism, the dismantling of open and accountable government, and our own incredulity.

The Senate and House Intelligence Committees' joint investigation was meant to focus on how U.S. intelligence agencies dropped the ball prior to 9/11. It turns out, for example, the National Security Agency (NSA) received an electronic intercept on September 10 that appears to refer to an impending attack.

But rather than examine what went wrong, the intelligence committee chairmen, at the request of the White House, began hunting down who in Congress leaked this embarrassing information to the press. (Never mind that leaks to the press are Washington's time-honored way for dissident insiders to let the public know of controversial issues and policy debates.) The FBI was even called in to polygraph those members of Congress who are investigating its intelligence failures.

This is the same FBI that concurrently was handling Operation TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System), a war-time network of vigilante spies. In the online magazine *Salon*, Dave Lindorff (a longtime contributor to *In These Times*) reported how his calls to TIPS weren't routed to law enforcement officials, but to FOX's *America's Most Wanted* TV show.

Critics had a field day. "Why stop with *America's Most Wanted*?" asked ACLU Legislative Counsel Rachel King, who suggested that the Justice Department hire Jerry Springer as its public information officer.

The White House retreated. Uncle Sam no longer wanted mail carriers, telephone repairmen and cable guys to snoop on their fellow citizens. In fact, the Justice Department announced that "the hotline number will not be shared" with such workers, just people involved in the "transportation, trucking, shipping, maritime, and mass transit industries." (The Teamsters have already volunteered their services.)

A victory for common sense? Or had we been duped again?

Our attention diverted, the Bush administration quietly got on with the steady erosion of constitutional protections in the name of fighting terrorism. As it scaled back its neigh-

borhood spy program, the Justice Department argued in federal court that the administration could deny constitutional protections—due process and freedom of speech—to any U.S. citizen it deemed an "enemy combatant."

Further, the administration's lawyers claimed the federal courts lacked the authority to intervene, because the executive branch has the right to make such determinations in a time of war, and the separation of powers clause of the Constitution protects the White House from judicial review. The result: secret courts operated by a secretive government.

The Bush administration wants to regulate public access to any information that might allow citizens to evaluate for themselves how the war against terror is being waged, how the nation's intelligence agencies have performed, how they are being kept in the dark by their government.

A couple of weeks ago, Walter Cronkite, on the 28th anniversary of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, described how CBS reporters came to understand that the Vietnam War was a misguided imperial adventure. "The war they saw in the fields was not the one they heard described in official briefings," said Cronkite, who went on to lament that, in the '60s, reporters at least had first-hand access to what was happening.

Today in Afghanistan—and perhaps soon in Iraq—reporters are fed briefings and kept on a tight leash. They are led only to those battlefields the Bush administration wants them—and, by extension, the American public—to see. In a similar way, the public and the press are allowed access only to those records about

Prisoners of this presidential idiocy, we suffer from the Stockholm Syndrome.

Enron's participation in the vice president's Energy Task Force that the White House wants us to see (in other words, none). The same goes for the records of the SEC investigation into the president's shady Harken Energy dealings.

But one more gaffe, and that too will be forgotten—and in some strange way, forgiven. Soon, tomorrow maybe, Bush will utter an unscripted sentence, trip over his tongue and make a fool of himself. Prisoners of this presidential idiocy, we suffer from the Stockholm Syndrome. We will laugh nervously. But the joke's on us.

—Joel Bleifuss

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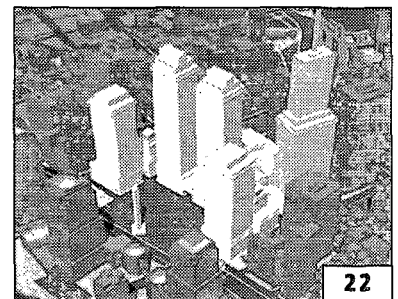
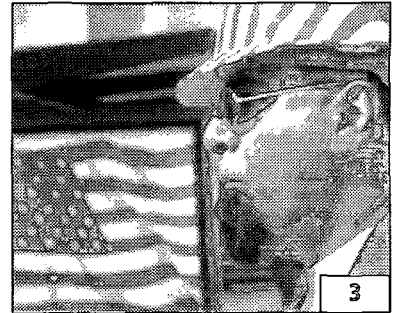
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By Orly Halpern

At one bar in Jerusalem, there is no *intifada* and no occupation.

Cover photo: Spencer Platt/Getty Images



Out of the Running

Ana Marie Cox hit a deep nerve with "Do's and Don'ts on the Campaign Trail" (July 22). As the daughter of a female career politician—just the kind of woman who might be expected to step right up to the ring and toss her own hat in—it was wonderful to see in print many of my own reasons for not following in my mother's footsteps.

Not only does the narrow range of acceptable images keep women out of the running; it most specifically keeps liberal women out of the running. Many of the feistiest, smartest and most politically savvy women I know skew to the left because they've spent their lives challenging tradition.

They've lived with men out of wedlock, dated outside their races, had abortions, gotten divorced and otherwise acted as though they were in full control of their own sexuality. They inhaled, dosed and tripped. They spoke out of turn, got arrested at demonstrations, and made enemies agitating for fair treatment at work. There are uncomfortable gaps in their resumes. They hate wearing high heels and think dieting and plastic surgery are stupid.

According to the unwritten campaign rules Cox discusses, any of these flaws renders them (and me) unfit for public office. Once the opposition research kicks in, it is all over but for the bonfire in the town square. The only women who dare to run in this climate are those who don't have to fear answering messy questions about their colorful pasts. No wild women, troublemakers, freethinkers or risk-takers need apply.

Thus the female half of the liberal movement is largely silenced by these rules. That's what is most insidious. Any woman who actually has first-hand, hard-knock knowledge about reproductive rights, childcare, welfare, spousal abuse, the glass ceiling and other gender equity issues is—precisely because she's had these politically energizing but reputation-ruining experiences herself—automatically disqualified from showing up in Congress and talking about them.

Sara Robinson
Half Moon Bay, California

Royally Foolish

May I suggest that you eschew further contributions from Nick Greenslade, whose anti-royalist piece on your recent back cover was just silly ("God Save Us from the Queen," July 8). For example,

he contends that the royals were wedded to the policy of appeasement of Germany in the '30s. While Edward VIII, later the Duke of Windsor, played footsie with the Nazis, that could hardly be said of George VI and his queen. His slap at American ignorance about the succession to the throne was well-deserved, but who ever said that the collective IQ of CNN Web site viewers was over 100?

Steward H. Benedict
New York

Over There

Joel Bleifuss' chronology of warnings about a terrorist attack was welcome ("Fear and Loathing," June 24). His analogy to the Vietnam decade is on target as well. War always has to be sold—dealing death to anyone is inherently discomforting. People are born to survive; killing is anti-human. And much as we hate to admit it in our sales pitches, our enemies are human.

But Bleifuss did not drive home his point when he had the chance. Yes, we must investigate the circumstances that led directly to 9/11,

but we must also never lose the chance to address the root cause of the problem. Terrorists are over here because we are over there.

I fear the Bush administration. I fear its failed and destructive foreign policy—a policy that maintains occupation, obstruction, containment and control over the undeveloped world, a policy that can only breed more and more terrorists against which we have no counter.

History shows that terrorism just about always succeeds—as the French and British found out when they were forced to withdraw from Algeria and Palestine, respectively. To do so is not yielding to a criminal; rather it is realizing one's own culpability. The solution is merely to find a way to save face and get out. That's what diplomats are for.

Don Sloan
New York

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On the Waterfront

Bush is eager to break longshore workers' union

By Ron Bigler

As contract talks between West Coast longshore workers and the shipping industry remain deadlocked, the Bush administration indicated in August that it will try to prevent a strike by any means necessary. Playing national security and the never-ending war on terrorism as trump cards, Bush is seeking to brand the International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU) and its members as un-American for not accepting an inferior work contract.

At issue for the union are the shipping companies' plans to install new technology that will eliminate jobs. The union wants to secure jobs for existing members and ensure that newly created jobs are covered by the ILWU contract. Unlike most workers in the United States, the 10,500 longshore workers on the West Coast have significant leverage in their industry, thanks to a strong union and a master contract covering 29 ports along the West Coast. These workers handle an estimated \$260 billion in cargo each year.

But Bush has already shown during contract negotiations for mechanics at Northwest Airlines and United that he is willing to use his power as president to block a strike and force workers to accept an often inferior contract. Last year, Bush also threatened to block a strike by flight attendants at American Airlines.

The president is authorized under the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947—better known as the Taft-Hartley Act—to prevent a strike or lockout for 80 days when such a stoppage would “imperil the national health or safety.” But a strike by port workers would primarily affect nonessential consumer goods from overseas—and thus the profits of the retail and shipping companies who import such goods.

Labor Department officials have discussed asking Congress to include longshore workers among those covered under the Railway Labor Act (RLA), which



Marcus Gomez holds a sign during an Oakland, California, rally for longshore workers.

allows the president to stop a strike when a dispute threatens “substantially to interrupt interstate commerce to a degree such as to deprive any section of the country of essential transportation service.” The act currently affects only rail and air carriers. Similar to Taft-Hartley, the RLA technically creates an emergency board that has 30 days to issue a report. The parties have a 30-day cooling-off period to consider the board's recommendations before resuming any stoppage. The RLA also allows the president to ask Congress to impose a contract if both parties fail to reach an agreement.

These aren't the only threats the Bush administration has made against the ILWU. In addition to discussing replacing striking workers with Navy personnel, a situation that could only be justified during full-scale mobilization for war, the administration has indicated that it might seek to break up the union into 29 separate bargaining units. That action would seriously weaken the union by allowing shippers to divert cargo to ports without strikers.

In 1960, the ILWU and Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) reached an historic agreement on the introduction of new technology: new jobs created by mechanization would automatically be incorporated into the union. But unlike

that agreement, which relieved dockworkers from grueling physical labor, the PMA is now trying to increase efficiency and lower costs without sharing any of the benefits with union members.

So far, the Bush administration has not made a convincing argument for interfering in the contract negotiations. But by showing a willingness to intervene, the Bush administration has given the shipping companies the upper hand. Why would the owners—whose patriotism is somehow not in question—concede to any of the union's demands when it knows Bush is eager to play strikebreaker?

Like Ronald Reagan's infamous 1981 decision to fire and replace striking air traffic controllers, Bush's intervention in the longshore workers' negotiations seems intended to neutralize one of organized labor's few remaining strongholds.

Despite Bush's rhetoric, delayed shipments to the Gap, Home Depot and other retailers hardly pose a threat to national security. “The driving force behind the federal interference in our contract negotiations are the giant retailers who import huge quantities of overseas products,” said Peter Peyton of the ILWU. “They have joined together ... in an effort to squeeze out every last drop of profit at the expense of good American jobs.” ■

Low on Energy

Will the administration bail out puttering power producers?

By Jason Leopold

LOS ANGELES—With several key players in the energy industry facing a financial meltdown, federal energy regulators and members of the Bush administration have been meeting behind closed doors to discuss emergency measures should some of these companies be forced into bankruptcy.

As stock prices plunge at corporations such as Williams Companies and Dynegy, two of the largest wholesale power producers in the country, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and Pat Wood, chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), are concerned that

nary expansion plans to build power plants across the United States. And back in December, Dynegy made a \$5 billion bid to purchase Enron. Now Dynegy itself is on the brink of bankruptcy, with its stock plummeting to less than \$1 a share on the New York Stock Exchange. "I'm surprised how these companies could get into a deep financial crisis so quickly given all they made last year, particularly in California," says Severin Borenstein, head of the University of California Energy Institute.

The Securities and Exchange Commission is asking the same question. Still, some energy experts now want Congress to step in and make sure the country does not fall victim to the same sort of energy crisis that rocked California in 2000 and 2001. "Government action is... needed to improve the investment climate in electric generation infrastructure," Lawrence Makovic of Cambridge Energy Research Associates told a Senate committee in July.

safety and health are being threatened. What regulators should do is make sure these companies abide by accounting rules and provide transparency for shareholders."

Yet consumer groups fear the Bush administration's close ties to the energy industry will result in some type of federal intervention, even though the financial problems these companies face are of their own making. "With [his] close ties to the energy industry, in conjunction with the public distrust of Enron and its ilk," says Doug Heller of the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, "Bush should think twice about dealing with this industry behind closed doors."

While unwilling to discuss what action, if any, the administration will take to stabilize the energy sector, a growing fear of nationwide blackouts has resonated with lawmakers and regulators in Washington. "The investments are simply not being made," says Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska). "It's a bleak picture."

FERC chairman Wood testified before a Senate committee in late July that credit downgrades and declining shareholder value within the energy sector "bring us to a very critical place on the future of infrastructure investment in this country."

Wood says these problems could keep energy companies from building new power plants and transmission grids to ensure adequate electricity supplies. On August 14, Wood met in Houston with representatives from about 30 energy companies to discuss the current state of the industry. Representatives who attended the meeting were unwilling to discuss the substance of the talks.

Borenstein says that despite the fear in Washington, even if Williams and Dynegy wind up in bankruptcy, power will still be produced. But their decline is a major setback for the Bush administration's deregulation efforts. "It will be more difficult to force states to open up their markets to competition," Borenstein says. "But I am not sure if there will be any reliability problems."

To Heller, this is just one more example of deregulation's failure. He points to California, the demise of Enron and now a financial crisis in the energy industry as examples. "The financial maelstrom in the industry is the result of deep corruption and fraud," Heller says. "The energy industry is not just Enron and then a bunch of innocent bystanders." ■



DAVID MCNEW / NEWSMAKERS

Trying to save deregulation and prop up the crumbling energy industry.

power prices could skyrocket, jeopardizing their scheme to deregulate wholesale power markets nationwide.

Since the collapse of Enron last December, the entire energy sector has come under scrutiny. FERC has been investigating Williams and Dynegy, as well as many of their rivals, for market manipulation: The companies are alleged to have created artificial electricity shortages in order to boost wholesale power prices in California. But in a recent report to Congress on California price-fixing, FERC singled out Enron for blame—a move critics charge ignores industry-wide deception.

A year ago, the major players in the energy industry were reporting record profits in the billions and undertaking extraordi-

"Some regional power markets that still need additional supply are relying on companies at the brink of bankruptcy to deliver the generation infrastructure needed to maintain reliability in the years to come."

There has been talk in Washington about a federal bailout of energy companies should Wall Street refuse to loan them money. Enron had asked the Bush administration for the same favor last year, when the company controlled the largest share of trading in the power and natural gas market.

But most analysts say a bailout is unlikely in the current political climate. "This is an issue the power sector has to work out on its own," says Paul Patterson, an independent energy analyst. "It's understandable that the government is concerned, and they should be. But this is not an issue where public

Action, Not Words

Bush is to blame for
worsening mine safety

By Ken Ward Jr.

On August 5, President Bush met with the "Quecreek Nine," the miners whose rescue from a Pennsylvania coal mine captivated the nation in July. Bush praised the miners and rescue workers: "What took place here in Pennsylvania," he said, "really represents the best of our country, what I call the spirit of America, the great strength of our nation."

Bush said nothing, however, about coal mine safety. Perhaps that's because his administration has done all it can to dismantle the safeguards meant to prevent coal miners from dying on the job.

Since taking office in January 2001, Bush has proposed mine safety budget cuts, halted regulatory improvements and reduced enforcement efforts. Mine safety advocates say the effects of those moves are now becoming clear: Last year, 42 workers died in U.S. coal



President Bush greets rescued miners Randy Fogle (left) and Tom Foy.

mines, the third straight year that coal mining fatalities have increased. So far this year, 18 coal miners have died on the job.

Last year's total jumped significantly in September, when an explosion at a Jim Walter Resources mine in Brookwood, Alabama, killed 13. That

blast was the worst coal mining disaster in nearly two decades. "When you look at all of this, it tells you that there is something wrong with mine safety in this country," says Joe Main of the United Mine Workers of America. "This is a reversal of a long-standing trend toward safer coal mines."

IN SHORT

BY KRISTIE REILLY

Halliburton's Sweet Deal

With 612 jail cells, the military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, apparently isn't large enough. The Pentagon says it needs another 204 cells—and you'd never guess who's building them.

It's Halliburton, the oil company Vice President Dick Cheney ran just before the 2000 campaign. Work on the additional cells should be completed by October by its engineering and construction subsidiary, but Halliburton may be profiting from the expansion project for much longer: The approximately \$9.7 million contract could grow to more than \$300 million over the next four years if additional options are exercised.

More interesting, though, is the fact that Halliburton has benefited from exclusive contracts with the military for years. Back in 1992, the Pentagon created the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, or LOGCAP, to out-source auxiliary services required to support troops deployed in the field—everything from building dorms and mess halls to doing the laundry. Halliburton has been receiving LOGCAP and other logistics contracts since then, supporting troops from Haiti to the Balkans.

In December, Halliburton was awarded an exclusive contract to provide such support to the military worldwide for an unprecedented 10 years. "Over the past decade," a company press release from last December crow's, "Halliburton has provided more than \$2.5 billion in support services to deployed forces under LOGCAP and the subsequent Balkans contracts."

Power Plant Pollution Kills Thousands Yearly

A recent report estimates that pollution from eight utility companies repeatedly cited by the Justice Department for Clean Air Act violations in 1999 and 2000 leads to thousands of premature deaths every year.

The study by Abt Associates, a firm hired by the Environmental Protection Agency, estimates that pollutants from the eight companies' cause 5,900 premature deaths, 140,000 asthma attacks and 14,000 cases of acute bronchitis a year. Companies cited in the report include American Electric Power Company, estimated to be responsible for 1,400 deaths annually; Southern Company, responsible for 1,200 deaths; and the Tennessee Valley Authority, responsible for 780 deaths. Other companies identified were FirstEnergy, Duke Energy, Southern Indiana Gas & Electric, Dynegy Inc.'s Illinois Power, and Cinergy.

The report was released by Eric Schaeffer, former head of civil enforcement at the Environmental Protection Agency. Schaeffer resigned in protest in March of this year, outraged at the administration's efforts to weaken enforcement of environmental laws. "This report shows how the Bush administration's failure to enforce the Clean Air Act is a serious threat to public health," he said.

Coal mining has long ranked as the nation's most dangerous occupation. In the early 1900s, it was common for 1,500 or more miners to die every year in the nation's coalfields. As recently as 1968, more than 300 died in a year's time. And that doesn't include those who died a slow death from black lung disease after they left the mines. In 1969, under pressure from striking miners in West Virginia, Congress passed the Coal Mine Safety and Health Act. Within little more than a decade, annual coal mine fatalities dropped to fewer than 100.

But for the law to work, the government has to enforce it, and every indication says the Bush administration won't. Under Bush, the Department of Labor has halted work on more than a dozen new mine safety regulations. The proposals, all made during the Clinton administration, concern issues that range from training requirements to mine ventilation plans to accident investigations.

In February, Bush also proposed to cut the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration's overall budget and slash the agency's resources for coal mine safety

enforcement. The White House explained the proposals this way: "The enforcement strategy in 2003 will be an integrated approach that links all actions to preventing occupational injuries and illnesses."

Dave Lauriski, a longtime coal industry official named by Bush to run the MSHA, bragged to an industry group that his agency's regulatory agenda "is quite a bit shorter than some past agendas." Lauriski insists such remarks don't mean that his agency will cut down on enforcement.

But before last year's Alabama explosion, Jim Walters Resources had been cited repeatedly for violating rules meant to prevent explosions—and MSHA appears to have done little to make the mine operator clean up its act.

At the Quecreek Mine southwest of Pittsburgh, the nine miners were trapped when they accidentally drilled into an adjacent, abandoned mine that had filled with water. The water poured into the active mine, flooding it and trapping the miners 240 feet underground.

Company officials and state regulators have blamed inaccurate maps that incorrectly depicted the distance between the

active and abandoned mine workings.

But already, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* has found that state regulators had warnings in 1999 the maps were inaccurate, yet allowed the mining to continue anyway. MSHA has known for years that many mine maps are not accurate, and has done little to address what experts say is a problem wherever coal is mined.

The good news is that problems with the nation's mine safety enforcement have caught the attention of Democrats in the U.S. Senate. Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-West Virginia), for example, has restored the money that Bush sought to cut from the MSHA budget. In July, Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) and Paul Wellstone (D-Minnesota) kicked off hearings to investigate problems with the nation's coal mine safety enforcement. "This year, the number of mine fatalities is poised to be even higher than last year's unacceptable rate," Kennedy said. "These are the tragically predictable consequences of the backlog of necessary mine inspections. This administration has consistently failed to enforce policies that keep miners safe." ■

(((((((((((APPALL-O-METER)))))))))))

BY DAVE MULCAHEY

The Good, the Bad, the Adamant **3.2**

Stuart Goddard—better known to watchers of MTV in the early '80s as Adam Ant—may have faded from the spotlight, but he hasn't given up all of the rock star's taste for property destruction. Goddard walked into a pub in London dressed as a rather foppish cowboy, reports the BBC, whereupon some derisive patrons started humming the theme of the spaghetti western *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*.

Enraged, Goddard left the bar, returning later to hurl a used car alternator through the front window. When patrons gave chase, the pop star (who in his heyday used to dress up as a highwayman) pulled out a starter's pistol and fended them off. Nobody was hurt in the incident, but Goddard was arrested

and brought to a mental hospital for examination. He is pleading temporary insanity to assault, criminal damage and weapons charges.

Guns in the House **4.0**

The nation almost lost a national treasure recently when a pistol discharged in the hands of Rep. Bob Barr. The Georgia statesman was handed the 1908 Colt .38-caliber pistol by lobbyist Bruce Widener. Barr escaped injury and managed not to kill anyone attending the reception, though he did shatter a glass door. "We were handling it safely," Widener explained, "except that it was loaded." Barr, an NRA board member, commented that the incident "underscores the importance of proven gun safety measures."

Valley of the Dolls **1.1**

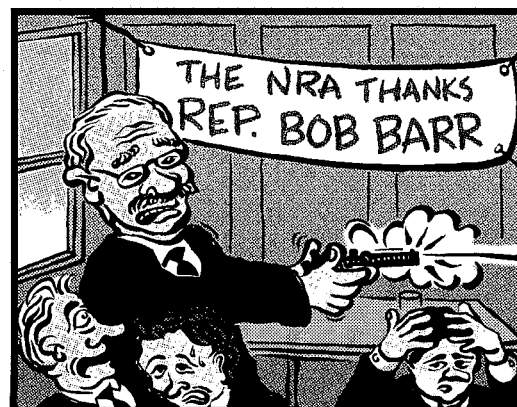
Pharmaceutical buffs the world over eagerly anticipate the arrival of Melonatan, the "killer app" of lifestyle drugs. Dubbed the "Barbie drug," it suppresses your appetite, clears up your skin, gives you a tan, and makes you horny. But, as the *Independent* reports, the drug has yet to be approved, and the companies

involved in developing it worry that if the sensational aspects of the drug are emphasized, regulators will balk.

Johnnie Johnson, spokesman for Competitive Technologies Inc., a Connecticut-based company

that has licensed the technology to the different drug companies to manufacture and market Melonatan, warns that the FDA "is always reluctant to license anything that could be called a 'party drug.'"

Melonatan was developed at the University of Arizona as a weapon against skin cancer. In clinical tests, male subjects noticed uninduced, raging erections. The rest is history.



NATHAN STREET

Shock to the System

A growing indigenous and people's movement in Bolivia

By Linda Farthing and Ben Kohl

On June 30, an indigenous leader won significant support in presidential elections in Bolivia for the first time, rattling the Bolivian establishment and the United States. It shouldn't be so much of a surprise: The second-place finish in the presidential race of Evo Morales, an indigenous leader of the powerful coca growers union, is a rejection of World Bank-led economic policies and the U.S.-financed war on drugs that has been brewing for some time.

With almost 21 percent of the vote, Morales received just 1.5 percent less than mining entrepreneur and former president Gonzalo ("Goni") Sanchez de Lozada. Sanchez de Lozada formed a weak coalition to win the congressional runoff, capturing the presidency on August 4.

A number of factors contributed to Morales' strong showing at the polls. Since 1998, under intense U.S. pressure, more than 80 percent of the coca that was once the country's most valuable agricultural product has been eradicated. Bolivia's success has led the United States to consider the country its most successful drug control program in the Andes. But a severe economic downturn has followed, and promised U.S. aid to offset the effects of eradication has been slow in coming.

Consequently, active anti-U.S. sentiment now joins frustration with previous governments, who have contributed to establishing Bolivia as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Income levels have stagnated for the past 20 years, and the economic collapse of Argentina has hit the country particularly hard—since January, remittances from an estimated 1.5 million Bolivians resident there have dropped sharply.

The 2001 victory against attempts to privatize the city of Cochabamba's municipal water supply put Bolivia on the anti-globalization map. The "water wars," an uprising of a broad coalition of citizen groups, led to a state of siege and the subsequent expulsion



DAVID MERCADO / REUTERS

Bolivia's elections may be a harbinger of things to come in Latin America.

of an international consortium led by the U.S. firm Bechtel, now suing the Bolivian government for \$25 million for breach of contract. The popular victory fueled nationalist sentiment against neoliberal policies and contributed to a wave of protests by tropical coca growers and indigenous peasants, who repeatedly blocked national highways in 2000 and 2001.

This nationalist, anti-neoliberal sentiment undermined support for Sanchez de Lozada, who, as minister of planning, was a principal architect of structural adjustment policies in 1985. Those policies privatized state enterprises, led to the firing of tens of thousands of public workers and severely reduced social spending. The implementation of structural adjustment in Bolivia made the country a model for World Bank-imposed development around the world.

A decade later, during his first administration, Sanchez de Lozada pushed through the partial sale of the country's largest state-owned firms to multinational capital. Before privatization, income from oil and gas production provided almost 50 percent of government revenue, and its loss has contributed to the ongoing financial crisis.

But perhaps U.S. Ambassador Manuel Rocha gave Morales the biggest push at the polls. In a highly publicized announcement just days before the election, Rocha threatened to withdraw all U.S. aid if Morales became president. Popular anger at this patent meddling in the country's democratic process boosted Morales' support significantly: Bolivian analysts estimate that the "Rocha effect" contributed as much as 5 percent to Morales' final tally. Since the election, the press has dryly referred to Rocha as Morales' campaign manager.

The growing role of indigenous people in local government also contributed to Morales' success. In 1995, Sanchez de Lozada's government introduced a decentralization scheme that increased local participation in planning, while successfully fragmenting opposition to neoliberal policies and refocusing attention on the local level. As a result, more of the rural population, which makes up almost half of the country, voted for indigenous leaders rather than the usual *mestizo* ("mixed") urban populists who have successfully manipulated indigenous voters for decades.

This display of electoral power—almost a third of the 157 members of the Congress and Senate are now indigenous—has significant implications for social movements throughout South America. Over the past 20 years, political decentralization programs from Mexico to Chile have to varying degrees allowed for increased grassroots participation in local government. At the same time, economic crises have created unrest and resentment at policies favoring international capital and reduced social spending.

The growing frustration with the status quo has been expressed through the election of progressives in Chile and Peru as well as Morales' success in Bolivia. Both Brazil, where the Workers' Party currently leads at the polls, and Ecuador, where an indigenous candidate is gathering strong support, have presidential elections scheduled for October.

The challenge for these new political forces will be to develop innovative policies—whether in government or in opposition—capable of addressing the needs of the poor majority in an increasingly global economic setting. ■

BY YVONNE ZIMMERMAN

Taking It from the Streets

President of the coca farmers' union in Chapare and the political party Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), Evo Morales has become a symbol of Bolivia's struggle against the forces of globalization and neoliberal economic policies. In These Times spoke with Morales in July.

For the first time, social and indigenous movements are moving into parliament as a decisive force. How did this success come about?

We have created our own political force because wealth and land are being concentrated in the hands of a few, and the majority of the people live in poverty. In the elections, corrupt politicians used to use us, buying our votes with money, gifts and promises. This has changed: The political parties of millionaires can't buy people's consciousness any longer. Of course, this has encouraged us a lot, but it's also made us nervous. We didn't expect to come in second.

A few days before the elections, U.S. Ambassador Manuel Rocha intervened. He threatened the end of U.S. support if you won. How did this warning influence the elections?

It's possible that in some places our support was reduced; in others, however, it grew. What's clear is that there was a lot of reaction to the U.S. intervention. Some upper-middle-class voters might have been frightened, but at the same time lots of young people said: Evo is young and anti-imperialist. With Evo we'll fight for our independence and for our freedom.

In January, you took part in confrontations between farmers protesting the government plan to eliminate coca and security forces. You were expelled from parliament and arrested, and many hundreds were injured or arrested. Finally, after massive protests, you won your seat back in June. Did these events influence the elections?

It is in this context that I have become enemy No. 1 of the neoliberal system and the U.S. embassy. The latter has a blacklist of leaders of social movements which it sees as dangerous for their politics, and on this list I'm on the very top. In January, the five

big political parties decided under pressure from the U.S. embassy to take Evo Morales out of parliament. ... They wanted to finish off the coca farmers' union and put me in prison. It's not least because of this that we triumphed in the elections.

The coca farmers' movement has become one of the strongest social movements in Bolivia. Why move into parliament now?

We know that we can struggle outside parliament. But political parties have been using us in the elections, and after winning thanks to our votes, they've punished us. That's why the question came up: Why can't we vote for ourselves? Why don't we decide ourselves instead of giving others the power to decide our destiny for us?

Of course, there's a big risk, too: There is persecution, like at the beginning of the year. Imagine: We're attacking the transnational corporations, neoliberal politics. There are some big interests there. That's why we're preparing ourselves.

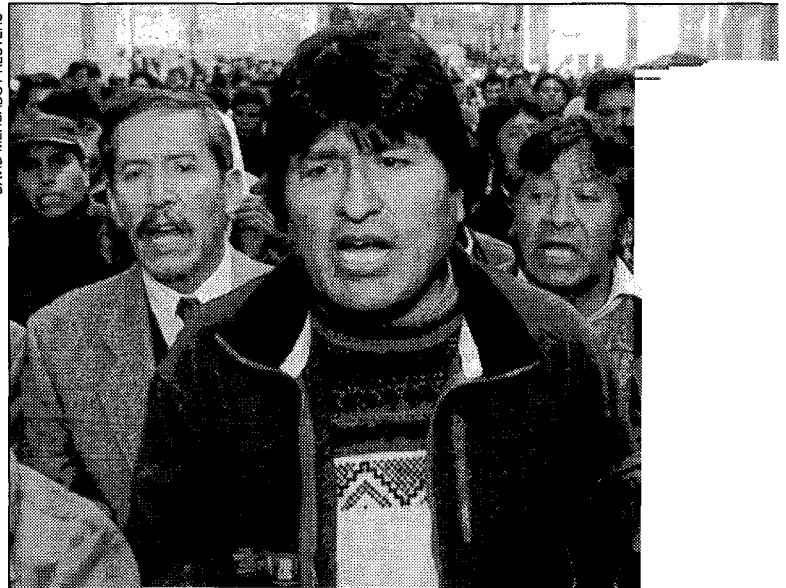
Does your party, MAS, have a political program?

Our program is based on the movement's proposals. It's ... an anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist position. We want to finish with the rule of the political mafia. We want self-managed companies instead of state companies and multinationals. Of course, the state will have to promote the collective, self-managed companies and support the struggle for self-determination. This is basically the center of our program.

What concrete steps will you take?

On an economic level, it's about stopping and reversing privatization. We want to get our com-

panies and natural resources back, because we can't allow them to be concentrated in the hands of a few transnational corporations. ... It's important to replace the system of injustice with one of justice. Today they call justice what can be bought; right depends on money. This has to end. ... In concrete terms, we'll promote national production and block free trade in that way. We'll reverse the economic reforms that have brought more inequality and poverty over us.



Evo Morales marches in downtown La Paz in July.

Will you work with other parties in parliament?

Working with neoliberal parties is totally out of the question. We'll carry on the blockades against neoliberal politics within parliament. Some people don't like us blocking the roads with our mobilizations or marching. Now we'll go on with the blockades in parliament, in a peaceful way. If that way of protest doesn't show any effects, however, we'll combine it with a mobilization of social movements.

Any final thoughts?

People are fighting for dignity. They don't like being dominated, and more and more people are starting to resist. That's why our movement is growing, that's why our political party received so many votes, that's why more and more social organizations are joining us. ■

FALLOUT

The Hidden Environmental Consequences of 9/11

By Juan Gonzalez

Un September 17, 2001, less than one week after the World Trade Center collapse, tens of thousands of office workers returned to their jobs near Ground Zero after receiving the go-ahead from federal and local safety officials.

Federal and city government wanted New York and the rest of the nation, which had been virtually paralyzed in the days after September 11 terrorist attacks, to return to normal as quickly as possible. President George W. Bush, New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and other leaders needed to show the world that the United States would not be intimidated by terrorism. There was another more pressing imperative at work, however: The longer that Wall Street and the nation's chief financial markets remained closed, the greater the likelihood of a stock meltdown and perhaps lasting damage to investors and the U.S. economy.

To achieve a rapid return to normalcy the government needed to persuade a jittery public that it was safe for civilians to reoccupy the scores of commercial skyscrapers and residential buildings in Lower Manhattan. With uncontrolled fires still raging in the towers, with thousands of bodies still buried in the rubble, and with the trauma of the terrorist attacks still fresh in their minds, many New Yorkers were understandably reluctant to return so quickly. Nonetheless, Wall Street and much of Lower Manhattan reopened for business on September 17.

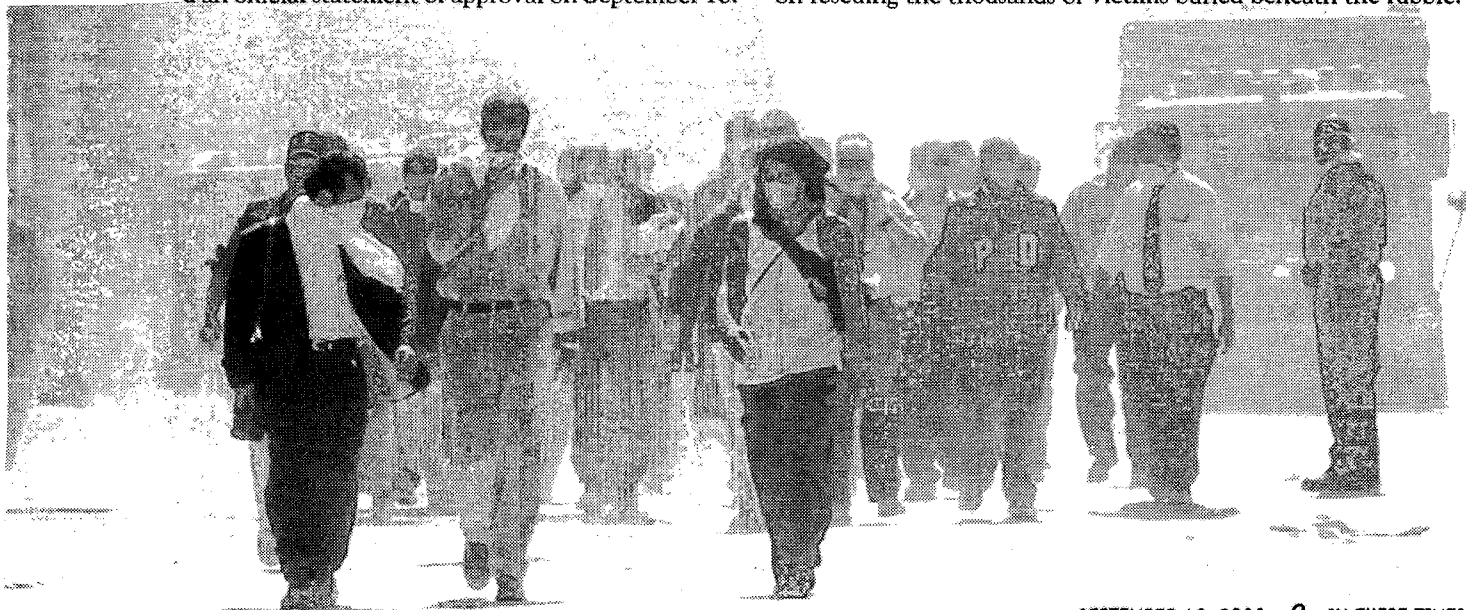
The nation's top environmental official, Christie Todd Whitman, of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who had given her preliminary endorsement of the reopening a few days earlier, issued an official statement of approval on September 18.

"I am glad to reassure the people of New York ... that their air is safe to breathe and their water is safe to drink," she said.

Similar assurances were given by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York City Department of Health. Even as they made those statements, however, officials knew that their own preliminary environmental tests of the air, dust and water in Lower Manhattan had revealed some troubling readings.

The tests found that considerable amounts of asbestos and heavy metals had been detected in dust samples throughout the area. Within a few weeks, officials would also receive the first results of aerial surveys conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) pinpointing the precise locations of hundreds of asbestos "hot spots" on rooftops, buildings and streets throughout the area, including some that were half a mile or more from the collapsed buildings. Before the end of September, the USGS would also report that dust on the ground and in the air downtown was highly caustic, with alkalinity levels that made it as potent as household drain cleaner. Health officials withheld this information from the public for several months.

Given the scale and unprecedented nature of the World Trade Center catastrophe, it is understandable that during the first few days after September 11, everyone, including public health officials, was focused on guarding against any further attacks and on rescuing the thousands of victims buried beneath the rubble.



Surely, no American city has ever confronted a calamity of this scale, nor has any nation faced the simultaneous release of such a complex array of toxic substances into a densely populated downtown area.

Despite their initial safety assurances on September 18, officials were scampering to compile a comprehensive inventory of what contaminants or hazardous materials had been stored inside the mammoth Trade Center complex before the attacks. They needed the information to know what materials were feeding the dozens of fires burning at temperatures as high as 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit and persisting despite all efforts to extinguish them.

EPA officials and fire-fighting experts were well aware, from previous studies of a handful of spectacular and tragic fires in hotels, commercial buildings and downtown areas, that such blazes are capable of releasing a witch's brew of some of the most toxic substances known—including mercury, benzene, lead, chlorinated hydrocarbons and dioxins. Despite this prior knowledge, federal officials rushed to dismiss or understate potential health dangers to the public and rescue workers at the site during those first few days.

Initially, the various health agencies also withheld from the public most results of their environmental testing. The state's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) refused outright to release the data, claiming that the test results were part of a "criminal investigation"—presumably the September 11 hijackings—and the city has yet to release all of its data.

On the surface at least, the EPA was more responsive than either the city or state agencies. It began to report some of its test results on its Web page on September 27. Coincidentally, that was the same day the agency learned that environmental lawyer and activist Joel Kupferman of the nonprofit New York Environmental Law and Justice Project had contacted my newspaper, the *New York Daily News*, and provided us with the results of independent tests he had conducted of World Trade Center debris.

Kupferman's results became the first direct challenge to Whitman's all-clear pronouncements. They revealed high levels of asbestos and fiberglass in a substantial portion of the samples. From then on, the EPA sought to calm the public by publishing on its Web page summaries of daily monitoring reports for asbestos in outdoor air, and the agency eventually expanded those summaries to include the results of periodic tests for more than a dozen toxic substances. The summaries invariably highlighted those results that indicated no danger, while the agency repeatedly downplayed or withheld test results that might raise public alarm.

The federal government has never established ambient safety levels for many of the contaminants detected in air samples taken around Ground Zero. Instead of admitting they had no certainty of what danger these substances might cause, EPA risk



LINDA JOHNSON/GETTY

experts at the New York regional headquarters devised ad hoc safety "benchmarks" or "removal action guidelines." They then misled the public into believing these were federally approved safety levels and reported that only a few of their test results were above these levels.

Once displaced workers and residents returned to their jobs and homes near the disaster site, a significant number of people began to suffer from respiratory and other health problems. Mark Bodenheimer was one of them. A veteran teacher at Stuyvesant High School, the city's most prestigious public school, Bodenheimer and the rest of the students and staff returned to the building, which is located a few blocks north of Ground Zero, on October 9, when the city's Board of Education reopened the school for classes after conducting a \$1 million asbestos cleanup.

"The air in the building smelled terrible," Bodenheimer said. "I had no respiratory problems before this, but I was back

there just five days when I started getting constant sore throats and severe headaches." His doctor advised him to get out of the school. Bodenheimer, a Stuyvesant graduate who had taught there for decades, reluctantly accepted a transfer to the Bronx.

Bodenheimer was no isolated case. A survey of three residential areas near the site, conducted quietly in October by the

**"I am glad to reassure
the people of New York
... that their air is safe**

to breathe and their water is safe to drink."

—Christie Todd Whitman, 9/18/01

Media Blackout

At first, the mass media, especially the local New York City press, dutifully reported the "official story" from the EPA and City Hall and reiterated that all was well with the downtown environment. By the third week after the attacks, however, thousands of people who had returned to work, to school, or to their residences near Ground Zero—even emergency workers at the site—started to complain of serious respiratory problems.

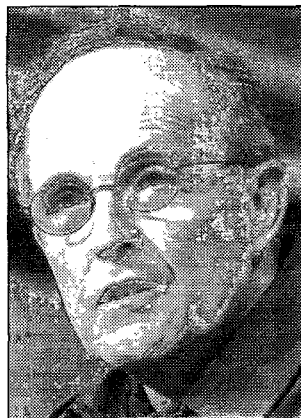
It was then that a few journalists, including myself, began to challenge the official story. On September 28, I reported in the *Daily News* that testing of dust samples around Lower Manhattan by the New York Environmental Law and Justice Project had revealed more widespread asbestos contamination than the EPA had led the public to believe, and that city officials were not enforcing the wearing of proper safety equipment by the hundreds of firefighters and other workers assigned to Ground Zero.

In a second column, on October 9, I reported that tests conducted by a widely respected environmental firm, Virginia-based H.P. Environmental, had revealed unusually high levels of asbestos fibers inside two office buildings near Ground Zero. A high percentage of the fibers found in those tests were of microscopic size, a result of the enormous pulverization of matter that had occurred from the force of the original collapse of the towers. The fibers were so small that it was

Centers for Disease Control and the city's own health department, revealed just how widespread such symptoms were: Nearly 50 percent of those questioned reported physical problems likely to be related to the Trade Center collapse, such as nose, throat and eye irritation, and 40 percent said they were suffering from persistent coughing. Like other disturbing information about the environment around Ground Zero, the public never heard much about this survey. The results were released quietly by the health department in a press release late one Friday afternoon in January 2002—three months after it had been conducted—and received virtually no media attention.

Yet there were too many people getting sick to ignore them all. According to a February 2002 study by the Natural Resources Defense Council, at least 10,000 people in Lower Manhattan suffered immediate health problems from exposure to the air near Ground Zero. Faced with a massive public outcry and growing doubts about the environment, federal and local officials hunkered down and kept repeating the same line: Any respiratory problems were temporary, a result of smoke and dust from fires that would soon be extinguished. While such symptoms were dis-

It should come as no surprise that Mayor Giuliani paid little attention to the public health aspects of the tragedy.



JOE RAEDER/GETTY

comforting, the officials claimed, they posed no serious short-term or long-term dangers.

The contaminant that got the most attention at first was asbestos, a mineral widely employed as fireproofing material before the federal government banned many of its uses in 1975. Asbestos fibers, once lodged in the lungs, can cause asbestosis, cancer and mesothelioma, a rare and fatal disease of the lining of the lung. The federal asbestos ban took effect while the Twin Towers were under construction; thus, the mineral was used for fireproofing of steel beams and insulation of pipes in approximately 40 floors of one tower and 20 floors of the other. Ever since the ban, the government has regulated removal of asbestos from buildings.

EPA rules clearly spell out when and how asbestos must be removed, but city and federal officials ignored those regulations at the Trade Center site. EPA officials misled the public about what federal regulations define as a "safety standard" for exposure to asbestos as well as what the legal requirements are for handling asbestos-contaminated matter. In fact, asbestos levels measured in many parts of Lower Manhattan were higher than those found in places like Libby, Montana—where the EPA is currently conducting a massive cleanup because of the town's widespread asbestos contamination.

possible they had been going undetected by some of the equipment federal agencies were using to find asbestos.

On October 26, the *News* published a third column of mine, one that was met with outrage from the city's political and business elite. That article, accompanied by a blaring front-page headline, "A Toxic Nightmare at Disaster Site," reported that hundreds of pages of the EPA's own documents revealed a wide array of toxic chemicals being released into the air and water around Ground Zero, sometimes at levels far exceeding federal standards.

Government and business leaders, clearly worried that the report would frighten the public, delay recovery efforts, and endanger property values in the financial district, sought immediately to discredit the column. One of Giuliani's deputy mayors angrily called a top editor at the *News* to complain. The head of the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce fired off a letter, which my paper quickly published, accusing me of "a sick Halloween prank." Even EPA chief Christie Todd Whitman chimed in with a guest opinion column in the *Daily News* on October 30 to refute my findings.

So great was the backlash that, from then on, top editors at the *Daily News* showed a marked reluctance to pursue stories about environmental pollution downtown, especially when no other newspaper in the city, including the *New York Times*, was following up on our initial reports. But metropolitan editor Richard T. Pienciak not only encouraged my reporting and edited my initial accounts, he simultaneously moved to expand the paper's coverage of the matter. Having worked on big environmental stories early in his career at The Associated Press, including the infamous Three Mile Island nuclear

accident, Pienciak was well aware of how safety agencies often handle the most complex problems from the public.

Sensing that the city faced an environmental disaster, he created a special four-person team of reporters to take a closer look at what was happening to residents and office workers in Lower Manhattan. From the first days of forming the team, Pienciak, who had supervised much of the paper's coverage of the disaster, was removed from his post as managing editor. The Ground Zero investigative team he created was immediately dissolved.

I continued to pursue the story in my columns, to the obvious displeasure of the paper's top editors, who took to scrutinizing my work more carefully than at any time in my 15 years as a columnist at the *News*. Getting each subsequent piece into the paper became a tense and emotionally draining battle, and they were invariably relegated to the back pages. Nonetheless, most of them were published, as were several other hard-hitting news stories. As a result, the *Daily News* emerged as the only paper in the city to provide any kind of consistent coverage of the Ground Zero environment.

As for the rest of the New York press, the *Times*, *Newsday*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Post* all accepted at face value the statements from the EPA and City Hall, as well as from a handful of academic experts who lined up to support those agencies, that there was no serious danger to public health. Not until early in 2002, when out-of-town newspapers like the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* published major stories on the environmental problems at Ground Zero, did the rest of the New York press begin to pay some attention to the issue. —J.G.

News of toxic substances other than asbestos being released into the air was not made public until October 26, six weeks after the collapse of the towers, when the *Daily News* published my front-page column on the subject. My information had been gleaned from a quick review of nearly 800 pages of EPA test data, which the agency had been forced to release after Kupferman filed a Freedom of Information Act request.

Only then did EPA officials concede that their testing had found elevated levels of other contaminants, including benzene, dioxins, PCBs, lead and chromium in the air and in water draining into the Hudson River from the Trade Center. However, agency officials insisted at a City Hall press conference that such high readings had occurred only as occasional “spikes”;

that they were confined almost exclusively to the immediate vicinity of the debris pile; and that they would soon disappear following the extinguishing of the fires. The fires, however, turned out to be far more difficult to put out than anyone had initially predicted. They

burned for nearly four months and even in late January were still smoldering below sections of the debris pile.

In the case of dioxins, among the most toxic substances known, the EPA repeatedly told the public that its test results showed very few readings above the agency’s “removal action guidelines.” In fact, the EPA has no standards for safe dioxin levels in air. Faced with high-level dioxin emissions around Ground Zero more typical of a volcanic eruption, the agency’s top officials in the New York region simply asked their risk assessors to devise their own removal action guidelines. They then told the public that few of its tests had exceeded those guidelines, when in fact a substantial number of them had. EPA scientists in other parts of the country were shocked when they learned that the New York region was posting safety benchmarks for dioxin that had not gone through the agency’s normal peer review process.

It wasn’t until December that the agency began releasing results of ambient air tests it had conducted for dioxin outside of the actual Ground Zero site. Some of those tests showed high dioxin levels as far as half a mile away from the trade center. Other agency tests showed dangerous levels of PCBs in dust nearly a mile north of Ground Zero, in an area that had been reopened to the public on September 17.

“What happened here is at the level of Watergate,” says Dr. Marjorie Clarke, scientist-in-residence at Lehman College in New York and an expert on dioxin and furan emissions from incinerators. “They covered up important information. It just seems to me that, from the get go, a decision had been made from some high-up government types that there is not going to be a problem here.”

Federal health and safety officials were not alone in misleading the public, however. Mayor Giuliani, New York City Health Commissioner Neal Cohen and Joseph Miele of the city’s

More than 200 New York City firefighters who served at Ground Zero are now on medical leave, and as many as 700 have exhibited respiratory problems—what is now called the World Trade Center cough.



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) abandoned their responsibility to safeguard the public’s health and grossly neglected safety issues for thousands of rescue workers at Ground Zero.

From the first moments of the attacks, Giuliani assumed direct operational control over all aspects of the governmental

response. The mayor made virtually all major announcements, whether about the death toll, the identities of officials who had perished, the progress of the rescue work, public security procedures, assessments of physical damage to Lower Manhattan, traffic restrictions for commuters, assistance to businesses and families of victims, and even dates and locations for funerals of firefighters.

Yet when it came to public health issues and environmental damage, Giuliani and his health commissioner said very little, except reiterate the EPA’s assurances about air quality. It seems unlikely that Giuliani and Cohen were simply repeating what the EPA told them out of naiveté. Both men had in the past evinced an arrogant—some would say reckless—disregard for public health matters. From 1999 to 2001, for instance, Giuliani spearheaded a massive pesticide-spraying campaign throughout the city to combat an outbreak of West Nile virus, first with the controversial pesticide malathion, then with the less potent but still dangerous Anvil. The spray campaign, perhaps the largest government urban pesticide experiment in U.S. history, sparked a huge public outcry when hundreds of city residents fell sick from the pesticide fumes and when thousands of fish began to turn up dead in Long Island Sound and in Staten Island’s freshwater ponds.

So it should come as no surprise that after the September 11 attacks a legendary hands-on administrator like Giuliani paid so little attention to the public health aspects of the tragedy. Within days of the collapse the various levels of government agreed to a division of labor on safety concerns: City Hall left the responsibility for all testing of the outside air and water around Lower Manhattan to federal and state health officials, while it assumed responsibility for checking and certifying the safety of the interior of any commercial or residential areas.

The city’s portion of the work, in turn, was left to the 6,000-member DEP, an agency whose primary job is to maintain and monitor

the city's vast drinking water and sewage disposal system, but that also has responsibility for handling hazardous-waste problems. The department, however, did not have nearly enough staff to cope with the pollution hazards it now confronted. Instead of admitting the problem and seeking help from other levels of government, city officials opted for allowing owners of private buildings to carry out their own testing and cleanup with little or no government oversight.

To understand the enormity of the environmental problem, we need to come to grips with the sheer size of what was destroyed on September 11. The quantity of contaminants contained within the buildings is truly staggering.

Consider just one substance, lead, as an example. Lead is an extremely dangerous heavy metal. Inhaling even minute quantities of lead dust over an extended period can cause brain damage. The use of lead in paint has been banned in the United States for decades, but the interiors of many inner-city tenements still contain undercoats of it. At the Trade Center, the danger came not from lead in paint, but from lead inside computers. The average personal computer contains anywhere from four to eight pounds of lead. We know that approximately 50,000 people worked in the two towers, and that most of them used personal computers. Several thousand more worked at Seven World Trade Center, a 47-story building just north of the Twin Towers, and at other, smaller structures on the site that were also destroyed. We can thus assume that at least 10,000 PCs, in addition to hundreds of servers and mainframe computers connected to them, were pulverized into dust that day or vaporized by the fires in the subsequent months. It is likely, therefore, that a minimum of 200,000 to 400,000 pounds of lead were released into the air, ground and buildings around the site.

Even if all individual contaminants in the air had been below permissible federal safety levels, there is yet another troubling concern for many scientists, what some call the "unknown synergistic effect" of exposure to even low levels of a variety of toxic substances at one time. "There were probably a thousand or more chemicals in that soup," says industrial hygienist Monona Rossol. "No one knows how that could affect a person."

Yet for weeks after the collapse, even when hope of finding any survivors had long faded, safety officials failed to coordinate or enforce efforts to ensure that thousands of firefighters, police, and rescue and cleanup workers at the site were properly protected against toxic releases. More than 200 New York City firefighters who served at Ground Zero are now on medical leave, and as many as 700 have exhibited respiratory problems—what is now called the World Trade Center cough. Many of those have been assigned to light duty, and it is feared a good portion may never be able to fight fires again.

In addition, a troubling number of rescue workers from other parts of the country who had volunteered at Ground Zero are reporting serious health problems. In Ohio, 37 of 74 members of Ohio Task Force One, a group of emergency responders who volunteered to work at Ground Zero, have become ill since returning home. In California, 100 of 395 emergency responders who worked at Ground Zero between September 12 and October 7 have filed workers' compensation claims because of illness they say is related to the World Trade Center catastrophe.

Five months after the disaster, Dr. Stephen Levin of the Selikoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine

at Mount Sinai Hospital stated that "high rates" of the hundreds of iron workers and other recovery personnel at Ground Zero examined by his center have experienced respiratory problems. Experts who have carried out long-term studies of the health effects of such fires suggest that this is only the tip of the iceberg of the health problems firefighters and rescue and cleanup workers will face in the future.

Whitman, Giuliani and other public officials should have told New Yorkers the truth from the start—that no one could guarantee the air around Ground Zero was safe because no one had ever confronted a disaster of such proportions. They should also have released all the raw data on government testing as soon as they had the results and made clear that safety levels for many of these toxins did not even exist.

The early blanket assurances that government officials issued were a grave mistake, and their continued defense of those assurances in the face of widespread public skepticism was inexcusable. Thousands of people may end up paying for that deception through unnecessary illness or premature death in the decades to come. In their rush to return New York City and Wall Street to business as usual, these shortsighted officials paved the way for a second wave of victims from the World Trade Center tragedy. ■

Juan Gonzalez is a columnist with the New York Daily News and a contributing editor of In These Times. This article is excerpted from *Fallout: The Environmental Consequences of the World Trade Center Collapse* (The New Press).

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THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF ISLAM IN AMERICA

BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

Aside from a few early remarks calling the war on terrorism “Operation Infinite Justice” and a “crusade,” President George W. Bush has publicly downplayed the religious aspects of the U.S. response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. But Christian fundamentalists and a belligerent coterie of influential neoconservatives have seized upon 9/11 to fire a fusillade of invective at the religion of Islam.

The most recent controversy erupted when the Rev. Jerry Vines, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention (the largest Protestant denomination in the country), told several thousand delegates at the group’s annual conference that many of America’s problems were caused by people promoting “religious pluralism.” According to the *Washington Post*, Vines said, “They would have us believe that Islam is just as good as Christianity.” Then he added: “Christianity was founded by the Virgin-born son of God, Jesus Christ. Islam was founded by Muhammad, a demon-possessed pedophile who had 12 wives, the last one of which was a 9-year-old girl.”

Instead of scorning him, Vines’ evangelical brethren rushed to his aid. The Rev. Jack Graham, newly elected president of the SBC, called Vines’ comments “an accurate statement.” The Rev. Jerry Falwell wrote to subscribers of his newsletter: “If you want to raise the ire of the mainstream press and the swarm of politically correct organizations in this nation, just criticize Islam.” The day following Vines’ comments, President Bush addressed the SBC, praising the group for its “religious tolerance.”

Bush’s reluctance to criticize the group is likely a product of a tightening political bond between the Christian right and the president’s neoconservative brain trust in foreign policy matters. This alliance is busy producing anti-Islamic propaganda, while simultaneously urging the United States to fully embrace Israel as its only ally in the region. Included in this group are Pentagon big-wigs Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, Attorney General John Ashcroft, syndicated columnists like Michael Kelly and Charles Krauthammer, and even Watergate conspirator Charles Colson.

Colson, now chairman of the Prison Fellowship Ministries, told the Fox News Channel that, unlike Christianity, Islam is not a “religion of love” but instead is “dedicated toward hatred and violence and resentment.” He was commenting on the recent arrest of Jose Padilla, a.k.a. Abdullah al Muhajir, the Brooklyn-born Puerto Rican who was arrested on suspicion of plotting to explode a “dirty bomb.” Padilla, a former Chicago street gang member, reportedly converted to Islam while serving time in prison. In a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, Colson wrote, “al Qaeda training manuals specifically identify America’s prisoners as candidates for conversion because they may be ‘disenchanted with their country’s policies.’” This was

a canny move, Colson reasoned, because America’s “alienated, disenfranchised people are prime targets for radical Islamists who preach a religion of violence, of overcoming oppression by *jihad*.”

Colson’s argument is a twist on Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” thesis, which posits that Islam and the West are now heading toward an acrimonious face-off. In reality, the tensions between Christianity and Islam are older than the United States itself. And Washington has a long history of antagonism and opposition toward Muslims at home and abroad. However, as illustrated most prominently by Padilla and John Walker Lindh, the U.S. citizen captured fighting for the Taliban, the distinction between indigenous and exogenous Islam can be blurry.

Lindh allegedly was first turned on to Islam by surfing hip-hop Web sites and reading Alex Haley’s *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, before visiting a mosque near his California home. Though Lindh was a child of the privileged West, his thirst for a more authentic version of the faith led him to the Middle East. He first went to Yemen, seeking a rigorous education in the Quran, made a stop in Pakistan, and then traveled on to Afghanistan, where he joined the Taliban. Captured near Mazar-e-Sharif, his spiritual quest will culminate with a 20-year sentence in federal prison.

Padilla grew up in Chicago’s gritty Logan Square neighborhood, and his teen-age years were beset with run-ins with the law. But his lengthy criminal record contains no hints of an inclination toward terrorism. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that he claimed to be a member of the Latin Disciples, one of the city’s most violent gangs. Although Padilla’s parents are Puerto Rican, MSNBC reported, he identified himself as African-American on a marriage license in Florida, where he moved in 1991. He was arrested there that year for aggravated assault and spent 10 months in jail. Justice Department officials say Padilla converted to Islam while imprisoned and got involved with al Qaeda in the late ’90s. He’s now being held in a military brig in South Carolina as an “enemy combatant,” a designation that allows the government to jail him without formal charges.

Both of these men’s notoriety comes from allegedly consorting with the enemy. But it’s worth giving closer scrutiny to the right’s claims of an Islamist infiltration in America. Far too little media coverage since 9/11 has focused on the country’s broader indigenous Islamic constituency. Yet the appeal of Islam in America is undeniable—indeed, it is the country’s fastest-growing religion. The increasing population of immigrant Muslims and the continuing spread of the religion among African-Americans—who comprise approximately 30 percent of the 8 million Muslims living here—as well as those influenced by African-American culture calls for an overdue look at Islam’s long history in this country.

The foundation for Islam's attraction to black Americans was laid centuries ago. But because scholarly interest typically reflects popular biases, to past generations of American historians the idea that a large number of enslaved Africans were Muslims was unthinkable. Typical was novelist James Michener, who wrote derisively in a *New York Times* book review of Alex Haley's *Roots* that "to have Kunta Kinte, or one of his fellow slaves praying to Allah while chained in the bottom of a Christian ship is an unjustified sop to contemporary events rather than a true reflection of the past."

But most historians now agree there has been an Islamic presence here from the nation's earliest years. Muslim evangelists (as conquerors, merchants and scholars) had fanned out across West Africa several hundred years before any Christians arrived. These Muslims converted many Africans in the area between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, a region where vast numbers of Africans were enslaved and shipped west. Sylviane A. Diouf's book *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* estimates that from 10 percent to 25 percent of all enslaved Africans shipped to the Americas from the 17th to 19th century were Muslims.

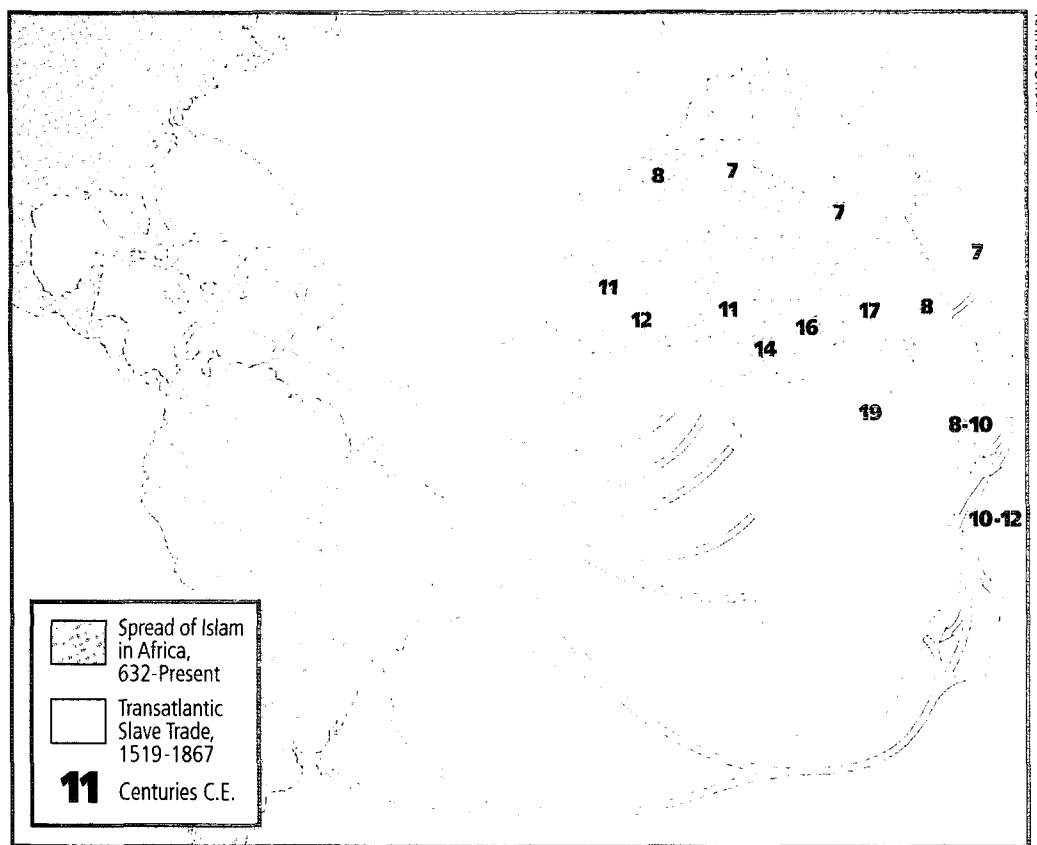
Many Islamic practices disappeared after that first generation died. But the legends and myths surrounding the religion persisted among both blacks and whites. Enslaved Muslims were reputed to have instigated many of the revolts that occurred on plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean islands. Nothing frightened slave-dependent societies more than the prospect of widespread slave insurrections. Islam's ability to provoke fear and animosity in slave owners burnished the religion's rebellious image.

Yet as the descendants of enslaved Africans adopted Christianity, the religion of their captors, their view of Islam was shaped by Christian attitudes and the long history of antagonism between Christians and Muslims. Denominations like the African Methodist Episcopal Church would develop as a refuge from white supremacist theology that sanctioned chattel slavery. But Islam took on an outlaw stigma in the black community.

That began to change when Edward Wilmot Blyden, an influential Christian minister, began promoting Islam as a nationalist alternative to Christianity. His 1887 book, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, argued that Islam's racial tolerance and doctrine of brotherhood made it a more appropriate religion for people of African descent than Christianity. He insisted that Christianity, in spite of its eastern origins, had become an ideo-

logical tool used by Europeans to help debase Africans and teach them to deny their own heritage.

The link between Islam and black nationalism was drawn tighter when an African-American migrant from North Carolina named Timothy Drew changed his name to Nobel Drew Ali and, in 1913, established the first "Canaanite Temple" in Newark, New Jersey. Ali changed the name of his group to the Moorish Science Temple of America in 1928, and temples dedicated to the notion that Islam was the old-time religion for black folks eventually opened around the country.



Ali's doctrine was an eccentric mixture of Islamic mysticism, Gnosticism and Masonic lore. As Mattias Gardell points out in his excellent book *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*, Ali's holy text is cribbed almost verbatim from *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, a 1907 book written by Christian mystic Levi H. Dowling. Although Ali's jerry-built theology was heavily plagiarized, his motive was to provide African-Americans with a religion and identity that transcended the ignoble conditions left in slavery's wake.

Contemporaneous with Ali was Marcus Garvey, whose Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) had the slogan "One God, One Aim, One Destiny" and pushed a doctrine of Pan-Africanism, racial pride and self-reliance. Garvey sought to unite "all the Negro peoples of the world into one great body to establish a country and government absolutely their own." At its high point, between 1920 and 1924, the Garvey movement claimed a membership in the millions. UNIA was the first real mass movement among African-

Americans and the largest international racial movement in the history of the African diaspora.

According to Richard Brent Turner, author of *Islam in the African-American Experience*, Garvey's Pan-Africanism was strongly influenced by Duse Muhammad Ali, a Sudanese-Egyptian Muslim who was "a prominent member of London's Muslim community and one of the most significant figures in the international Pan-African movement during that time." Although UNIA wasn't a religious movement per se, it utilized religious themes in urging black people toward economic self-reliance and cultural independence; Garvey's professed goal of black repatriation to Africa was suffused with biblical imagery. Elijah Poole, the son of a Baptist preacher from rural Georgia, reportedly was involved with the UNIA's Detroit chapter before joining the Nation of Islam and becoming Elijah Muhammad (and both of Malcolm X's parents were members of UNIA).

Along with political insurgents and militants, Islam has appealed to African-American artists, from novelists to rappers. Jazz musicians like Ahmad Jamal, Art Blakey, McCoy Tyner and Abbey Lincoln became practicing Muslims, and even Charlie Parker once was rumored to have changed his name to Abdul Karim. Most of these musicians were attracted to the Ahmadiyya movement, an Islamic order with roots in 19th-century India that began proselytizing in the United States during the '20s. The Ahmadiyya movement was the first established Islamic order that focused its proselytizing efforts on the African-American community.

Ahmadiyya may have come first, but the Nation of Islam (NOI) soon became the religion's most visible black expression. The group came into existence in 1930, when a mysterious silk merchant—known variously as W.D. Fard, Wali Farad, Wallace D. Fard or Farad Muhammad—appeared on the streets of Detroit calling himself a "prophet of Allah from the holy city of Mecca." He preached a message of black divinity and white iniquity (and an ascetic doctrine of moral probity, frugality and sobriety). His message spoke directly to a people who had been utterly debased by America's white-supremacist society. Historically confined to a segregated and impoverished world for no other reason than their skin color, many African-Americans found it easy to attribute their treatment to demonic influences.

Fard soon developed a large following in the ghettos of Depression-era Detroit. Although he claimed his doctrine was based on Islam, it was a fractured version of the creed. The olive-skinned stranger disappeared, just as mysteriously, in 1934 after designating Elijah Muhammad his head man. Muhammad later deified Fard and dubbed himself God's messenger. Through Elijah Muhammad's leadership, the NOI emphasized Fard's racial teachings. Central were the notions that the black man was the "original man," divine by nature. White people were created by a

scientist named Yakub, who used a eugenics process to "bleach" original people of their color and their humanity. In NOI demonology, whites are referred to as "Yakub's grafted devils."

But Turner and others urge a revisionist take on the NOI's racist dogma. In context, they argue, Fard's race-based depiction of the Islamic message was made necessary by African-Americans' peculiar racial history. The mythic ideal that placed blond, blue-eyed northern Europeans at the pinnacle of a racial hierarchy and black people at the nadir was the guiding principle in Western racial thinking. This view of humanity allowed Christians to own "soul-

less" black slaves while proclaiming their piety. Turner writes: "Before Fard could restore his converts' knowledge of their 'true names, history, religion and ethnicity,' he had to destroy that aspect of the white race's invincibility that made black inferiority and self-hatred possible on a deep psychological level."



The NOI reached its greatest prominence with the emergence of Malcolm X. Through his extraordinary charisma and intelligence, Malcolm helped build the organization into a national force, well established in most large U.S. cities. The intensity of Malcolm's identity quest from when he left the NOI in March 1964—changing his name to Malik Shabazz, denouncing Elijah Muhammad's eccentric doctrine, and embracing Islamic orthodoxy—until his assassination the following February helped light the fuse for the black power

explosion that followed. The Black Panther Party, cultural nationalism, a new Pan-Africanism, black arts and black studies movements, as well as a host of indigenous Islamic groups, were accelerated by his example.

But the tumult of those years took its toll on many ideological warriors. By the early '70s, the Black Panthers had been virtually wiped out by FBI counter-intelligence programs, and infighting between the "revolutionary" and "cultural" nationalists had poisoned any larger unified efforts. Many black power veterans began taking a second look at the NOI. They discovered that numerous black power groups had cribbed their programs from Elijah Muhammad's blend of pidgin Islam and black nationalism. If revolution meant a radical change in social conditions and communal outlook, if its result was to create a new people untainted by the socialization of the old, then the NOI surely qualified.

The NOI already had an enviable reputation of rehabilitating substance abusers and other community miscreants with unique efficiency. Tales are legion of inner-city sociopaths magically transformed into sober, reliable workaholics after hearing Elijah's teaching. Malcolm X's prison conversion set the mold for thousands of African-American inmates.

What's more, the call for economic and cultural self-reliance, which became the rallying cry of the black power movement, had been answered by the NOI long before. By the early '70s, the NOI had utilized its mostly low-income member base to

accumulate an impressive portfolio of independent ventures, including grocery stores, restaurants, bakeries, dry cleaners and thousands of acres of farmland. Bow-tied NOI members selling newspapers and bean pies with cordial aggression became a familiar sight in the inner city.

Some bitterness remains between black nationalists, who felt a strong affection for Malcolm, and NOI members, who remained faithful to Elijah Muhammad. Many nationalists were convinced that top-level NOI officials ordered Malcolm's assassination. And until a public reconciliation between Minister Louis Farrakhan and Malcolm's family in 1995, members of the NOI condemned Malcolm as an apostate, unworthy of his popular acclaim. No longer as public, many remain confirmed Malcolm-haters.

By the time of Elijah Muhammad's death in February 1975, the group had begun de-emphasizing its anti-white message and attracting a wider range of acolytes. Wallace Delaney Muhammad, Elijah's rebellious son and seventh child, took over when his father died. Within a year, the younger Muhammad had transformed the NOI from a race-oriented sect into a group professing Islamic orthodoxy according to Sunni tenets. (He later changed the spelling of his name to Mohammed to further distinguish himself from his father's legacy.) This development wiped away two of the NOI's basic beliefs: that Allah can be personified (in W.D. Fard) and that Satan can be embodied in a "race" of people.

Mohammed urged his followers to reject black nationalism and proudly embrace American citizenship. His struggle to humanize a doctrine forged by oppression was aided by the civil rights movement, which made the white-devil rhetoric less appealing. His group, now called the Muslim American Society, is by far the largest of all indigenous Muslim groups, with an estimated membership of 2 million.

For those nurtured by the NOI's militant separatism, however, this was unspeakable blasphemy. Farrakhan initially pledged fealty to Mohammed's new vision, but soon broke away to begin teaching anew Elijah's race-based doctrines. Since 1977, Farrakhan has been plugging away at rebuilding Elijah's NOI. Exact membership numbers are hard to ascertain, but knowledgeable observers estimate Farrakhan's following at about 50,000.

The NOI's organizational model, wedding religious and military sensibilities, has an ominous historical resonance with fascism. But Farrakhan's rhetorical militance has won him admirers throughout black America. That aspect of his appeal largely accounts for the hip-hop generation's continuing affection for Islam; his name is positively evoked in dozens of rap records. His conflicts with Jewish groups over his dangerous flirtation with anti-Semitism and Holocaust deniers provoked a circle-the-wagons response that burnished his appeal to rebellious-minded youth as someone who refuses to bite his tongue. Despite that controversy, his 1995 Million Man March was the largest single

gathering (of blacks or whites) in Washington's history, though pundits remain reluctant to grant him that glory.

But in recent years, Farrakhan too has shifted away from racial demonology to a message more in accord with Mohammed's inclusive Islamic vision. The two men's annual rituals of reconciliation since 2000 hint that Farrakhan intends to slowly bring the NOI more in accord with Islamic orthodoxy. The closer Farrakhan gets to Mohammed, the further behind he leaves the NOI's eugenic doctrine. And his gestures are not just limited to fellow Muslims. Farrakhan joined Mohammed last October at a joint appearance

with Christian television minister Robert H. Schuller, founder of the Crystal Cathedral Church. Billed as an "Evening of Religious Solidarity," the gathering marked a historic development in the evolution of the NOI, but received sparse media coverage. More ominously, Farrakhan has forged a link with the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church and has been friendly to Lyndon LaRouche, the eccentric economist known for his conspiracy rhetoric.



NATHAN STRAIT

Despite growing religious links between the two former rivals, Farrakhan and Mohammed struck differing chords in their responses to September 11 and the war on terrorism. "If Mr. Bush wants the world to join him in this war, then prove to the world that [Osama bin Laden] is responsible for this heinous crime," demanded a skeptical Farrakhan in an October 16

speech. After recounting the dismal record of American interference in the region, he concluded that U.S. action is not based on a quest for justice, but oil, or who "controls the sweet crude." This summer Farrakhan launched a "peace mission" to a number of Arab countries, including Iraq.

Although Mohammed has expressed misgivings about "innocent Afghans being killed by these U.S. attacks," he has urged U.S. Muslims "to be more conscious of our [American] citizenship." Mohammed's New York representative was even chosen by New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to say a prayer at Yankee Stadium during a visit by President Bush. This is all the more remarkable recalling that Mohammed was born into an organization that once demonized the United States just as stridently as bin Laden does today.

Deeply rooted in U.S. culture, Islam has proven its utility as an agent for change and a force for stability. Those who argue that the religion is atavistic or a product of postmodern nihilism must be more careful in their condemnation. Like other religious believers, Muslims often oscillate between precept and practice. But pluralistic cultural pressures are more likely to moderate the excesses of Islamist cults, like al Qaeda and Islamic Jihad, than an endless war. The nation has not done enough to mine the wisdom of Muslims—particularly African-Americans—who have successfully reconciled the obligations of Islamic piety with pluralistic democracy. We are in desperate need of such insight. ■

10 Lessons from the Corporate Collapse

By David Moberg

Judging from George W. Bush's "Wacko" economic forum, the fragile economy needs more tax cuts for the rich, more unfettered markets, more personal virtue—and then everything will be all right. Give the Bush-Harken-Enron-Cheney-Halliburton team an A+ for consistency, but failing marks on all other counts. There are many lessons to be learned from the collapse of the bubble economy and the scandals of corporate financial skulduggery, but the White House hasn't learned any of them. Here are 10 for starters.

1. There is no new economy.

Remember endless growth? The Dow 30,000? Well, business cycles may vary in their details, but they go hand-in-hand with capitalism, and ultimately companies must make real profits if the system is going to work. "Irrational exuberance," as economists Robert Shiller and Charles Kindleberger most famously explained, is endemic to capitalism. And as Nobel Prize-winner Joseph Stiglitz's work emphasizes, inevitable distortions and inadequacies of information create irrationality.

Despite novel conditions created by computer and telecommunications technologies, and by the expanded global markets, real-world capitalism remains an amalgamation of a narrow concept of rationality (based on the most efficient—that is, most profitable—use of capital) and some fundamental irrationalities. Left on its own, the market is not a perfectly self-regulating mechanism for universal good, but a limited, useful machine that can easily veer off on a destructive course.

2. The crisis is not the result of a few bad apples.

The entire barrel is rotten. In this case, the barrel is the framework of rules and regulations for business. Not every executive is a fraud or cheat, but if the system permits cooking the books, defrauding investors, overcompensating executives, rigging prices, polluting the environment, breaking unions and abusing workers, then it puts pressure on every business to move in those directions. The failures of the much-vaunted U.S. model of deregulated cowboy capitalism were already evident in growing inequality and insecurity and a declining quality of life. Now even much of the positive side—growth, profits, new businesses, productivity, soaring stock markets—has been called into question as an accounting chimera. It's time to question the whole model—lock, stock and barrel.

3. Banish the cult of the invincible CEO.

The excesses of managers have helped destroy many corporations, millions of good jobs and the retirement security of tens of millions. CEOs have treated their posts as a license to loot their own corporations, workers and even investors. The problem is not just bad accounting, but no accountability. Every corporation needs



at least a majority of independent directors (as well as directors selected directly by employees). Protection is also needed against self-serving actions (like CEO-appointed compensation committees and golden parachutes), greater power for shareholders, and guarantees of the right of all employees to organize. Ultimately, corporations must answer not just to their executives, or even their shareholders, but to society as a whole.

4. Regulation is good.

Indeed, regulation is necessary, both for the survival of the system and, more important, to make the system fairly deliver the goods. First, the financial system should serve the needs of the broader economy, not create speculative bubbles. Over the past two decades, old regulations of finance were dismantled—like the separation of investment and commercial banking. The Federal Reserve failed to rein in the exuberance (as tougher requirements on lending for stock speculation might have done). Financial "innovations" sprang up without any control (like the special purpose entities used by Enron or a vast world of financial derivatives). And crony capitalism flourished.

Second, the market must be governed by certain rules of fair play to maintain competition and channel it in socially productive directions. While non-governmental groups, including unions, can play an important role, the government is the essential regulator, even if the mechanisms government uses and the way regulations are written are open to debate.

5. Regulation must go global.

The expanded global market has given corporate executives and financial speculators more freedom to escape regulation and to play off one country against another. But governments also have rushed unwisely to give away the power they still possess. Expanded "trade" agreements are locking in a worldwide order that makes it more difficult to regulate corporations in the public interest. And the exposure of more economies to the deregulated global financial markets has increased instability and hardship.

Take the example of American companies relocating to foreign locales to avoid taxes. Initially Bush was fighting European efforts to rein in tax havens, but the public temper has turned as a result of the corporate scandals and a heightened sense that escaping taxes during wartime is unpatriotic. Political and labor movement pressure recently stopped Stanley Works from leaving Connecticut for Bermuda, and Congress barred military contracts to companies that fled after January 1 (and may close the loophole entirely).

But there is still a big problem that hurts poor countries as much as the rich: One-third of total global gross domestic product is now held in financial havens, Oxfam reports, and the conservatively estimated \$50 billion in revenue that poor countries

lose every year to tax havens is equal to six times the cost of achieving universal primary education.

6. Let the sun shine in.

The International Monetary Fund and the U.S. government demand that poor countries be more financially transparent. That would be a good idea in the United States, too, especially for so-called public companies. Now the whole system is an insider's game, with stock analysts—promoters, more accurately—giving special access to stock offerings managed by their companies to favored executives (or insiders like Martha Stewart and George Bush getting tips to dump stocks before bad news is released publicly). Instead, there should be one set of books open to everyone.

Relationships among research, brokerage, banking, consulting and auditing businesses also should be kept at arm's-length. There should be tougher regulation of insider trading, full accounting of stock options as expenses, and prohibitions against short-term holding of options by executives. Institutional investors, like big mutual fund companies, should be open about and publicly accountable for how they vote their shares.

7. The economy should serve real people and real needs.

It's simply ludicrous to assume that bowing to the whims of the market is the best way to provide what most people need. Capitalism can be creatively productive, or it can be parasitic (as in the capitalist classes in so many undeveloped countries). Despite the technological innovations (and it's worth remembering that the Internet and much of the computer revolution would never have happened without government funding in the early stages), American capitalism has turned increasingly into a scheme for the powerful to plunder existing wealth through takeovers, corporate restructuring, privatization and other financial maneuvers.

This is reflected in growing inequality and the concentration of wealth and income at the very top—a development exacerbated by tax cuts for the rich. The trend is shown most starkly in how the new “barons of bankruptcy,” to borrow the *Financial Times*’ phrase, enriched themselves while driving their companies into the ground. Meanwhile, in courtroom bankruptcy proceedings, workers are near the end of the line when it comes to claims on corporate assets.

Adding injury to insult, Congress is likely to approve new personal bankruptcy legislation when it returns in September. That bill greatly harm individuals, protecting the banks and credit card companies but not those losing their health insurance (though health-related financial problems are a leading cause of personal bankruptcy). This is precisely the inverse of the lesson that Congress should have learned.

8. Stop shifting risk.

In every sphere of life, the trend has been to shift increasing amounts of risk to the average American. Although sold under

the attractive names of “choice,” “freedom” and “flexibility,” the typical result has been to threaten their livelihoods. For example, riskier defined-contribution pension plans—like 401(k)s, which Congress still hasn’t protected and regulated—have been replacing defined-benefit pension plans. Growing numbers have no pension plan at all. And though Bush and the Republican leadership continue to push Social Security privatization, which would massively increase retirement insecurity, some Republican candidates are changing their positions—or at least their rhetoric—as public opinion swings against such schemes.

Safety nets are diminishing: While the boom economy in the late '90s reduced poverty somewhat, the numbers of people in “extreme poverty” actually increased, as welfare and other assistance was cut. Fewer families have health insurance, and the insurance they do have covers less.

Meanwhile, free trade exposes more workers to the risk of losing their jobs. Yet while a diminishing percentage of workers have union contracts to protect them, no CEO will take a job without a contract that pays him or her handsomely, even if the exec screws up and is forced out.

9. The corruption of politics by corporate money is bad for democracy—and the economy.



The Democrats, who should be for government regulation of the economy to help working people, have lost any sense of conviction and direction. Much, though not all, of the blame for their submission to the market-fundamentalist, pro-corporate agenda lies with the current campaign-finance system. As a result, the range of political debate has been narrow, and working people have little voice.

That means there is less ability to win the kinds of reforms that are needed to make the economy work well. The McCain-Feingold reforms are not likely to change that situation significantly, though public financing could.

10. It's the powerful versus the people.

For a brief moment, Al Gore had it half-right, even if he (and especially his running mate Joe Lieberman) didn't really believe it. For the past three decades, the powerful have waged a very successful but “one-sided class war” (in the words of former United Auto Workers President Doug Fraser). Of course, it has been fought in different terms—against big government, taxes, regulations and inflation, but for free trade—and it has hidden under many other banners (including a wide variety of social issues like gun control and abortion that obscured the economic agenda of the powerful).

There has been a much less vigorous effort to mobilize the people to curtail the powerful and keep them socially accountable. The final lesson is that the times and popular sentiment may be as ripe as any in decades for reviving that old populist message. ■

WILL DIGITAL KILL THE RADIO STAR?

By Dyan Neary

The good news is, your old radios will still work," proclaims the digitized voice that greets each visitor to the Web site of iBiquity Digital, the principal proponent of the new wave of digital radio. "The bad news is, they won't be turning any heads."

The worse news is, your old radios won't work for long.

The Federal Communications Commission, under pressure from the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), seems hell-bent on pushing a total conversion to a digital spectrum—a move with far-reaching implications for who will have access to the public airwaves. But the transformation of radio is being carried out largely in secret. "Politicians and corporations have effectively conspired here—and I don't think that's too strong a word—to take what should be our most democratically powerful medium and make it the medium of a handful of corporations," says media critic Robert McChesney, author of *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*. "It is unfiltered, unadulterated, 100 percent pure American corruption. Period."

So-called in-band digital systems would use satellites instead of transmitters to deliver radio signals. The two main in-band systems under development in the United States are In-Band On-Channel (IBOC) and In-Band Adjacent-Channel (IBAC). The IBOC system can transmit a digital signal within the current analog AM or FM signal, while IBAC transmits the same signal in an unused digital spectrum adjacent to the existing analog one. Because the former allows for a transition period wherein both digital and analog transmissions can be picked up by existing analog receivers, IBOC has the clear edge.

Indeed, despite repeated declarations of impartiality from the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the FCC, a consensus has formed that digital conversion to the iBiquity system is almost a sure thing. "I don't want to sound like a used car salesman," says Robert Struble CEO of iBiquity, the product of the recent merger of USA Digital and Lucent Digital Radio, "but it's a little bit of a something-for-nothing. If 50 years from now people are still buying and listening to analog radios, you'll never see [the end of analog]."

Despite these assurances, the transition period wherein IBOC is introduced will almost certainly be followed by a total con-

version to a new digital spectrum, forcing broadcasters and the public to purchase expensive new equipment—and effectively blocking low-power community stations from the airwaves. Analog could be archaic by the end of the decade.

Since the infamous Telecommunications Act of 1996 overhauled regulation of ownership among communications markets, an unprecedented consolidation craze has homogenized those industries. The effect was most striking in radio, which is now dominated by conglomerates such as Infinity Broadcasting and Clear Channel. The latter owns more

than 1,200 stations—covering 70 percent of the radio market. The digital conversion will amplify that centralization, with iBiquity as its sole developer and the prohibitive cost of digital transmitters shutting out low-power and community radio.

Struble emphasizes the benefits of conversion: a "radically upgraded sound quality" for AM and FM and a host of new data services. More sinister is the "Buy button" that would

allow listeners to instantly purchase an album by the artist whose song is playing or a product being advertised. Though no digital radio receivers are on the market yet, the whole setup has broadcasters and advertisers salivating. Ford and General Motors have enthusiastically agreed to install the digital system in cars—one of the most effective marketing tools for a complete conversion.

Theoretically, the transition could create space for dozens of new stations in a single market. "When you convert from analog to digital, there's five times as much bandwidth," explains Pete Tri Dish of the Prometheus Radio Project, which is currently working to help others start up their own low-power stations. "To a community or pirate radio activist, that looks like there are five times as many stations."

Unfortunately, he says, the reality is that each channel will simply contain "five times as much junk." That's because the same conglomerates will retain control of the entire space on and around their existing analog channel. New separate feeds will be available on a single channel, simultaneously broadcasting news, music, sports scores, stock quotes, traffic and weather reports.

Politicians and corporations have effectively conspired to take what should be our most democratically powerful medium.

The NAB, one of Washington's most powerful lobbies, claims to be neutral on the issue of digital conversion. "We don't have a position on Digital Audio Broadcasting because we can't endorse a single company," says NAB spokesman Jeff Bobeck. "And iBiquity has established itself as the major developer of this technology."

But that hasn't stopped NAB from pushing for the switch. "The NAB board passed a resolution last year saying it was encouraged by the development and hoped to get it into people's homes as quickly as possible," Bobeck says. What's more, NAB board members have been major investors in iBiquity's digital technology. Other investors include 14 of the nation's top 20 radio broadcasters, including Infinity and Clear Channel.

Sources from the NAB and iBiquity predict total conversion—meaning the termination of the analog signal—could occur within five to 10 years, although Edward Delahunt of the FCC's Audio Services Division says that decision ultimately lies with the FCC. It will probably happen once receiver penetration has reached about 85 percent, he suggests, or when the top 20 markets have converted to digital technology. "Don't judge [digital] until you've heard it, because I have," Delahunt says. "And I think it's a very exciting thing. Exciting and hopeful. Eventually people will make this decision because it will benefit them."

Delahunt maintains that information regarding the changeover is public, and that the FCC is open to rejection of "the biggest technological breakthrough" if there is enough opposition, but the conversion almost certainly will go through without public discussion or dissent. The only forum for discussion is the FCC's Web site, which is hardly frequented by the average citizen. "Any debate will really be among the moneyed interests," McChesney says. "There will be zero public participation."

Low-power FM activists have made it clear they oppose a conversion to digital via thousands of letters. But Delahunt is convinced that broadcasters are positioned for a rapid transition, and that complaints from the microradio industry are "a lot of nonsense."

"Over time, who can predict that this technology won't become affordable for those stations?" asks Delahunt, whose division is responsible for licensing low-power stations. "Who would have predicted that every household would have one-and-a-half computers?"



After years of fighting the FCC for licenses, the movement for low-power radio could be left dead by the digital conversion.

An unabashed Struble sums it up nicely: "At the end of the day, business is business, and nothing comes for free. People are going to have to buy this digital equipment."

The new digital transmitters will carry a six-figure price tag, as opposed to the mere \$115 cost of a single watt analog transmitter kit. The whole idea behind low-power radio is the ease with which a group of impassioned individuals could set up a station and make their voices heard for relatively little money. But after years of mobilizing support and fighting the FCC for licenses, the movement could be left powerless.

"Digital Audio Broadcasting will effectively destroy low-power FM if it works out the way they want it to," says Shawn Dewald with the A-Infos Radio Project, which produces radio broadcasts in MP3 format. "The thing about radio now is that even homeless people have one. It's one of the most cost-effective forms of mass communication, and it's being perverted by this conversion. There might be some Christian stations with a shitload of money and enough people funding them to broadcast their crap, but most community radio will be in danger."

The push for digital began about three years ago, Dewald says, at the peak of the microradio movement. When the FCC began making promises to allot a series of

low-power licenses, the movement became divided as some put their energy into cooperating for what Dewald calls "table scraps." He says that the energy of the movement then disappeared: "People started thinking, 'OK, let's calm down and work with the FCC and put our energy into getting licenses.' But basically licensing is a joke—there's no place in most urban areas you can even get one. That was really a step back for microradio."

For others, the struggle has simply become disheartening. "It's a bad time to be a communications media activist," says Pete Tri Dish. "I've watched everything happen exactly the way it shouldn't have happened."

To draw public attention to their cause, low-power activists will be gathering in Seattle in September outside the annual NAB conference—what they're calling the "WTO of broadcasting." Alongside the protest, they're setting up an "education fair" to put a spotlight on the digital conversion. For digital to sell, consumers will have to be persuaded of the benefits of a "host of new data services" that reach deeper into their pockets. Expensive converters will be needed for current analog stereo systems to function at all.

Ironically, one source of solace for the cynical low-power operators is a general decline in listenership of commercial radio. "There's less interest now because of the wasteland radio has been turned into by media conglomerates," Dewald says. "So things may backfire and blow up in their faces."

Stay tuned. ■

Casualties of Consensus

By Sandy Zipp

Until a few months ago, there was still something akin to a mass grave at the southern tip of the island of Manhattan. But with the human and architectural remains of the World Trade Center removed from that 16-acre, seven-story-deep wound, the site that once held the collapsed mass of the twin 110-story towers and the obliterated residue of 2,823 souls now resembles little more than a sprawling construction site. But how to contemplate building in the wake of such a catastrophe? And what to build?

There has been no shortage of rhetoric on this front. But the facts are these: Shopping-mall developer Westfield America has a 99-year lease on the retail space crushed beneath the towers. Developer Larry Silverstein holds the lease on the fallen towers themselves, and owned 7 World Trade Center, the building that collapsed late in the day on September 11.

**After the World Trade Center:
Rethinking New York City**
Edited by Michael Sorkin and
Sharon Zukin
Routledge
236 pages, \$25

Since the fall, he has had architects on payroll at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill—the firm famous for pioneering glass tower boxes—tinkering with new plans.

In addition, a number of ad-hoc groups formed in the weeks and months after September 11 to represent victims' families, Lower Manhattan residents, city planners, architects and Wall Street interests in the rebuilding process. Forums were held, discussions and arguments had. Should the lost office space be replaced? Can the city stem the corporate evacuation to New Jersey and Westchester County? What to do about the crippled transportation network of subways and commuter trains? How should a memorial look and feel? This back and forth continues, but much of the palaver seems beside the point.

The site is still owned by the Twin Towers' original builder, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.



The fix is in: Mayor Michael Bloomberg and developer Larry Silverstein.

This means that New York Gov. George Pataki holds the reins. In the fall he had the Empire State Development Corporation—empowered by law to build anything anywhere in the state with minimal concern for local zoning ordinances—spin off an entity called the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC). Charged with coordinating and directing rebuilding efforts on the Port Authority's land, the LMDC, similar to the Port Authority itself, is one of those nebulous, little understood entities that determine much of what gets built in American cities. As a "public corporation," this oxymoron is one in a long line of public-private partnerships that have remade so many downtowns across the country since President Nixon killed federal urban funding.

Combining the raw power of a public agency with corporate influence, efficiency and lack of accountability, conventional wisdom says the LMDC should have no problem getting done what it wants done. Most of the governor's initial appointments to the LMDC's top ranks were part of his coterie; the head is a former co-chairman of investment firm Goldman Sachs. After Pataki dispatched an upstate congressman to Washington to ensure that federal funds for rebuilding were funneled through Albany, not City Hall, it looked like the state was going to freeze the city out of the

decision-making process altogether. But then Pataki's fellow Republican Michael Bloomberg upset Democrat Mark Green in the mayoral race, and the governor threw the city a bone, giving Bloomberg four spots on the LMDC board to divvy up.

The LMDC, trying to deflect the impression that rebuilding would go ahead without any public input, went to great pains to assure the public, victims'

**The back and forth over
the future of Ground
Zero continues, but
much of the palaver is
beside the point.**

groups, elected officials, residents of Lower Manhattan and planners that their voices would be heard. In the spring, after months of surveying the various interests, holding forums and going about finding consensus, the LMDC issued a "blueprint for renewal."

The LMDC's "principles for action" name-checked all the current, appropriate planning boilerplate, laying out a process for developing "a diverse, mixed-use magnet for the arts, culture,

tourism, education and recreation, complemented with residential commercial, retail and neighborhood amenities." But plans overflowing with good intentions almost seem designed to lose their least developer-friendly elements as casualties of consensus.

In mid-July, the LMDC offered six visions of what a redeveloped site might look like. It seems that no one imagined how much would be lost, or how much the language of democratic consensus would remain merely rhetoric. The six proposals—templates for possible final plans—are uninspired and largely indistinguishable downtown-by-numbers design.

Superficially different arrays of massive towers hovering over a few acres of open space, they represent various conceptual ways of arranging the space where a memorial would be installed. None of them are attributed to any particular designers, although one is certainly based on the final product of the secret Skidmore, Owings and Merrill drawings.

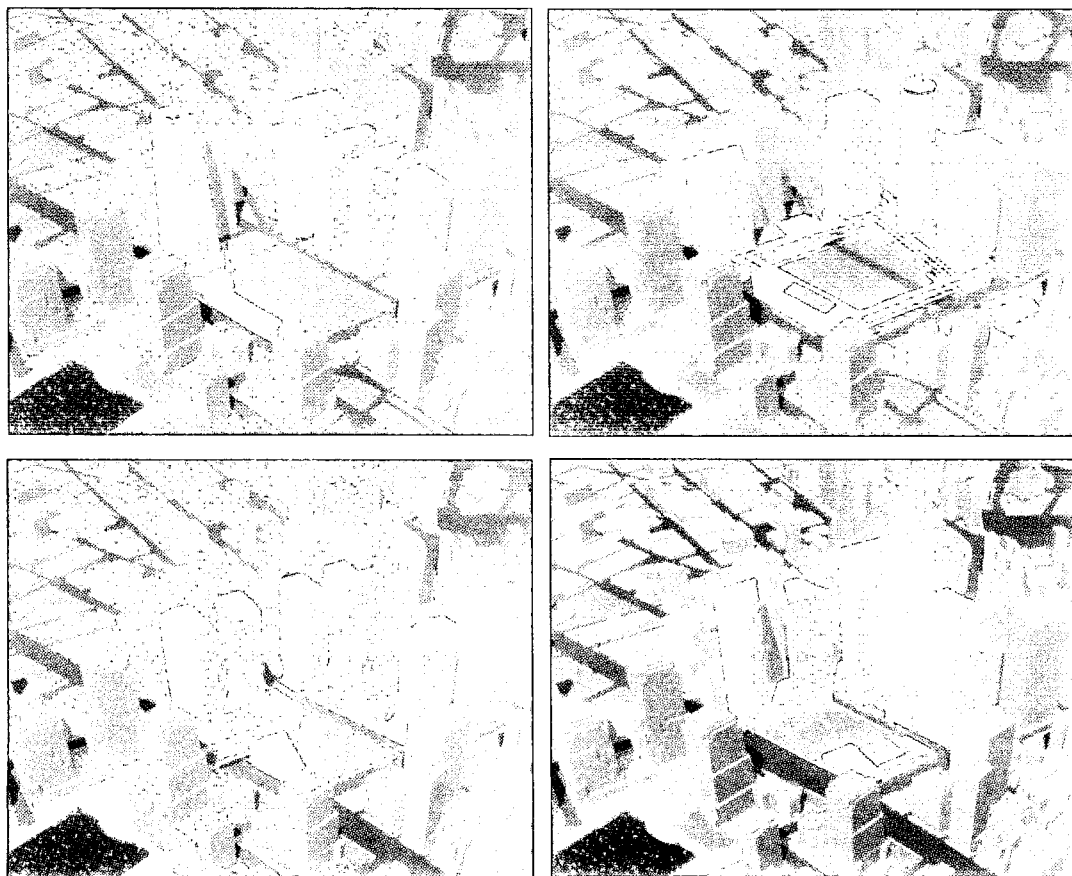
Rightfully, they all restore a portion of the street grid obliterated by the World Trade Center's superblock footprint, and most seem to call for squeezing a new transit hub beneath the office blocks. But the plans all have something else in common: They're driven not by public needs or "mixed-use" ideals, but by real estate. All of them feature four or more office towers of between 30 to 60 stories, and a few boast 80- or 85-story giants. Two of them build over the footprint of the towers. The Port Authority apparently intends to support their leaseholders, Silverstein and Westfield America, in recouping lost investments. It's a dismaying cliché, but the whole process has been business as usual in New York.

Yet with Pataki up for re-election in the fall, and Democratic contender Andrew Cuomo already criticizing the lack of a "big vision" in the proceedings, the story is far from over. Moreover, Silverstein is currently in a court battle with his insurers. He claims that the two crashing airliners represent two separate attacks, and that he's owed for both. If he wins, he'll bring too much capital to the table to be dismissed. But if he loses, the Port Authority may be able to renegotiate the terms of their lease with him, and sign on to a less office-heavy plan.

Meanwhile, public and professional outcry against the six proposals has been so great that after two giant town-hall meetings, the LMDC is already backpedaling. They've extended their timetable and pledged to go back to the drawing board. On the one hand, all the talk about public participation looks like so much smoke and mirrors. But on the other, the LMDC must pay at least lip-service to the rhetoric of inclusion. Continuing pressure, the election and as-yet-unforeseen court battles may democratize the plans yet.

Maybe it's not too late to be hopeful, but what has been left out from the beginning is telling. As the planner Peter Marcuse remarks in his contribution to the new essay collection *After the World Trade Center*, the process of garnering consensus, much heralded by state-of-the-art planning discourse, can too often lapse into a professional exercise in rationalizing or overriding messy conflict. Often that's best accomplished by not recognizing the conflicts in the first place; indeed, the LMDC's consensus is not so much made or found as it is activated. It reflects an understanding already in place shaping who the LMDC would comprise—and what sorts of findings it might make.

So perhaps it's ridiculous for Marcuse to condemn the LMDC for announcing its intent to develop "the infrastructure improvements that will trigger ... private investment." It should be no surprise that the renewal effort will be guided into safe, corporate harbors by an elite body appointed in the name of the public weal, and empowered to direct rebuilding on land owned by a state agency. What's galling, in the end, is that despite all the



Clockwise from top left:
Memorial Plaza, Memorial
Square, Memorial Garden
and Memorial Triangle.
Excited yet?

LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

How about these: Memorial Park and Memorial Promenade.

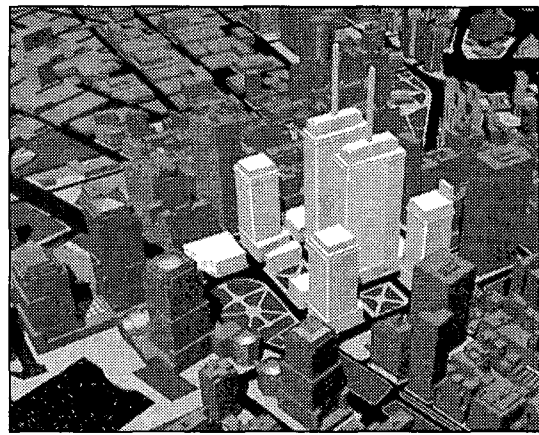
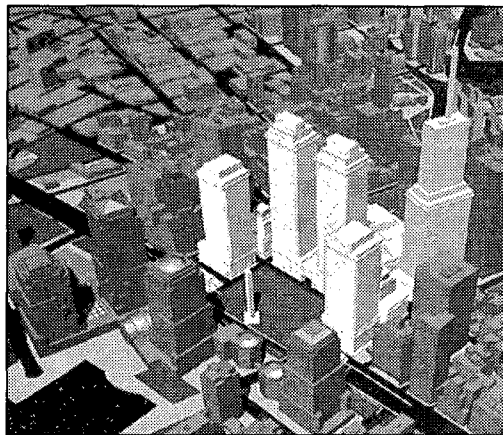
talk of “public process” and “public space,” more open, inclusive, democratic conceptions of public life don’t even make it to the table.

At times *After the World Trade Center*, like any book jumping into print in the middle of an ongoing story, seems at once rushed and already too late. Some of the essays seem to be reacting to an earlier moment when it appeared the towers themselves might be rebuilt. Some feel like phoned-in, obligatory recapitulations of familiar left comment on the events of September 11. The best pieces hew close to the ground in question, surveying the history of what used to be called the Lower West Side.

Historian John Kuo Wei Tchen, for example, uncovers the “early, low-rise, mixed-use port culture” of the area when it was home to maritime pursuits, the outdoor bazaar of Washington Market, the Arab neighborhood called the Syrian Quarter, or later in the 20th century, the consumer-electronics district Radio Row. These several generations of port culture were wiped out by public-works projects and real estate development culminating in the World Trade Center.

This sort of place is, as Andrew Ross observes, an urban form distinctive to New York. And while the LMDC pays lip-service to mixed-use planning, that’s not enough to create the kind of public, democratic street life germane to the world of port culture. The problem, Ross understands, is not one of design only, but of political economy. Adding mixed-income provisions to mixed-use zoning, he observes, “is the only available technical instrument that can encourage, though never guarantee, that balance of residents, visitors and strangers in free flow which gives urban space a sufficiently public character.”

Meanwhile, the LMDC, respecting the victims’ families, has pushed the question of a memorial to the forefront of its public deliberations. Despite much armchair speculation and the fact that the six plans all feature the word



“memorial” in their title, nobody can yet say what a memorial will look like, or how much of the 16-acre site it will occupy. A design competition has yet to be formally announced. The LMDC, however, has already decided how the memorial should feel. It “will stand as an eternal tribute” not only to the victims, but to “the enduring strength of democracy.” It will be “a celebration of freedom” and it “will reflect the free exchange of ideas, goods and services among diverse peoples that the World Trade Center embodied.”

The memory of the World Trade Center is up for grabs right now, and the debate over a memorial will galvanize the struggle to win the right to tell the towers’ story. Largely unloved as buildings, the twins nonetheless enjoyed familiar, comforting iconicity as a landmark, as visual reminders of New York’s continuing global sway. The towers were made to be looked at from afar, rather than lived in and around. Many New Yorkers had accepted and even appreciated them on these terms, numbed, a cynic might say, by decades spent enduring the often inhuman impact of architectural whim and fashion.

As architect Mark Wigley notes in his excellent essay “Insecurity by Design,” the towers became popular icons because they seemed to have no interior, existing only as symbols and facades. The “relentless open weave” of their ever extending surface made the World Trade Center “a pure, uninhabited image floating above the city.” When the towers came down, ironically and tragically, they could finally be seen as inhabited. And it is only after that loss of life that the buildings, the physical casings, are being celebrated as icons of “free exchange.”

Bound up in this celebration of the World Trade Center is the notion that it represents the particularly American freedom Al Qaeda wished to bring to its knees. The attacks of September 11 were certainly aimed at the United States and Western secular decadence. But as Neil Smith and David Harvey point out, they were not directed at symbols of American ideals or nationhood, but at symbols of U.S. global military and financial power. That is the indelible significance of the World Trade Center, and of its demise. Whatever else might be claimed in its name, it cannot fail to represent—in life and now in ruins—the unfettered power of American elites to shape both foreign and domestic landscapes. Perhaps no memorial will capture such a critique—nor should it necessarily attempt to do so—but the memory of all those lost lives is besmirched by the empty abstractions of the LMDC’s reflexive, free-market nationalism.

What should be remembered in designing a memorial, and in developing Lower Manhattan for that matter, is that the building of the towers did much to stamp out “the free exchange of ideas, goods and services among diverse peoples,” while the process by which they were erected, directed from on high by the Rockefellers and the Port Authority, did much to dilute “the enduring strength of democracy.” But that should not dissuade us from seeing how rebuilding might put a little democracy back into a space that for so long symbolized the lack of it, both at home and abroad. A prime virtue of *After the World Trade Center* is that it does not shy away from such connections, asking us to view the politics of globalization and urbanism in tandem.

It is possible that the Port Authority will be convinced—or forced—to give up many of its office towers. If so, the former World Trade Center site and the surrounding area might end up resembling, in look and feel, something like its neighbor Battery Park City. An engaging, attractive space, Battery Park City combines townhouses and low-rise apartment buildings with upscale offices, shops, restaurants, health clubs, parks and other amenities. It's a model of "mixed-use" development. But as Ross notices, "BPC has never shaken off its antiseptic profile as a security enclave where the public are temporary visitors and where the sharing of public space in its riverside park and piazza, while genuinely spirited, still feels like a privilege and not a right."

What's missing is the sense of what Michael Sorkin calls "thick, urbane interaction" churned by "the great mixing engine of difference." These, of course, are the age-old New York ideals. Historians and cosmopolitan idealists have evoked them for years. Politicians call upon a blue-collar version of this

rhetoric to cultivate the fughedaboutit populism needed to win elections. But while there's no shortage of talk about the "gorgeous mosaic," Sorkin finds that it's largely a multicultural facade. In the last two generations, the island of Manhattan has become "increasingly monochrome," and with a few exceptions the differences in its neighborhoods "merely physical."

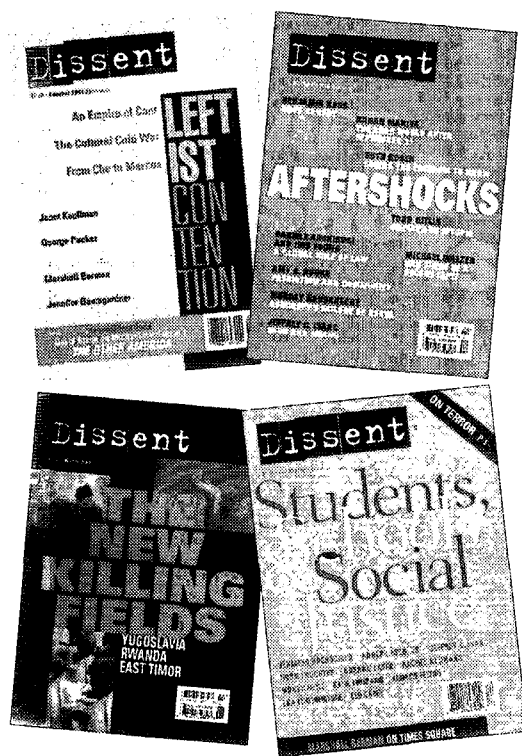
There is no doubt that over the past 50 years a sense of locality has been pushed to the boroughs, leaving much of Manhattan below Harlem (the next gentrifying hotspot) and outside Chinatown a playground for the young and the rich. Yet the rebuilding process downtown remains a prime opportunity to construct a living memorial to the vast diversity of peoples who animated the worlds behind the towers' blank facades. Will New York squander that chance, and fill in that sudden, unexpected 16-acre blankness with more of the same bland upscale theme-park urbanism slowly eating away at the rest of Manhattan?

One could imagine, with the help of *After the World Trade Center*, something entirely different. The final blueprints

won't be in for some time, and there will be more forums and opportunities for "public input."

What might a real public landscape look like? Couldn't a little piece of "port culture" still be planned back into the Lower West Side? How about zoning for light industry, craft workshops and a bustling open bazaar near the proposed new train station? Couldn't a sublime memorial share the restored street grid with nearby guaranteed low-income housing, rather than merely the vague housing for "a wide variety of income levels" now on offer? What about small independent businesses and shops rather than the "galleria of premier retail offerings" now under review? What about real public space? More parks, sure, but also meeting halls, community centers, a public library? Restore some of the unpredictable, spontaneous world of mixture that the World Trade Center finished off. Why not? ■

Sandy Zipp is a Ph.D. candidate in American studies at Yale University.



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The Worst of Times

By David Hawkes

During its heroic phase, American capitalism's self-image was egalitarian, free-booting and anti-authoritarian. Its ideology involved a strong belief in the freedom of the individual to acquire wealth and comfort through innovation and hard work. This

The Future of U.S. Capitalism

By Frederic L. Pryor
Cambridge University Press
462 pages, \$35

is an admirable belief, and it has been greatly admired. The current worldwide dominance of capitalist ideology owes little to the furtive, guilty attitude to money-making that has characterized European history, and less to the naked force that has propped up free enterprise in the Third World. Capitalism is currently viewed by many as an inspiring, liberating economic system because of the heroic form it has taken in the United States.

Frederic Pryor's book suggests that this idealistic phase of American capitalism is drawing to a close. The invigorating, competitive liberal market that has ruled until recently is, he claims, in terminal decline and will soon be replaced by a cynical corporate oligarchy: "The U.S. system will evolve in many different ways toward a capitalism with an inhuman face." The future will bring a "merciless economy where the needy are cloaked with social invisibility and largely abandoned to their fate":

In an optimistic scenario, a kind of "corporate welfare state" might emerge, with the business sector as primary beneficiaries, not the low-income population. In a pessimistic scenario an oligarchic system might emerge, with a fused corporate/government elite setting economic and social policy for the nation. The two scenarios differ primarily in the

degree to which democratic rights for the mass of citizens are preserved.

Pryor predicts that U.S. economic growth will slow as the population ages and begins to spend rather than save. The economy will become more fragile and volatile, as currencies flow freely across borders while globalization prevents the federal government from taking action to avert crises. Corporations will grow bigger, and competition will decline, as cross-border mergers evade national antitrust laws, producing huge cartels that will dominate politics as well as the economy. Economics and politics will converge, both being controlled by the same

and slot-machine. Trust in government will collapse, involvement in civil society will disappear and social solidarity will break down. A crime wave will only be averted by the introduction of a police state or the development of private and corporate armies.

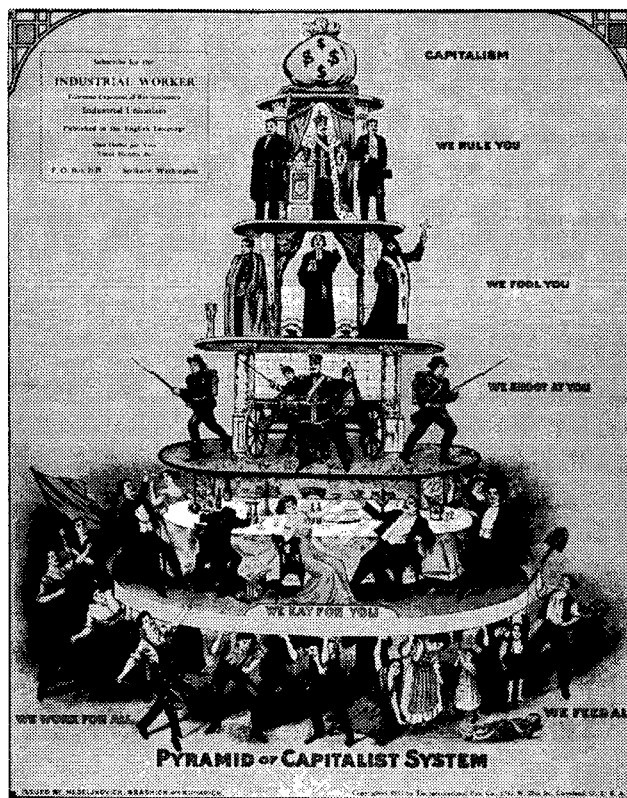
Environmental change may raise prices of food and natural resources, disproportionately penalizing the poor and handing power to the owners of land and raw materials. Taxes will increasingly fall on labor and not on capital; income differentials will return to 19th-century levels. Social mobility will decline, and the poor will lose the consoling possibility of pulling themselves up by the bootstraps.

Pryor does not much discuss the psychological effects of all this, but it seems likely that under such conditions people will become passive consumers kept func-

tioning by regular administrations of the appropriate branded narcotic: Ritalin for youthful rebellion, Prozac for mid-life crises, Viagra for aged detumescence. The heroic, enterprising individual who provided the ideological rationale for liberal capitalism will degenerate into a drugged, alienated robot.

Some might say that Pryor's argument is less a prediction of the future than a description of the present, and it is true that the dystopia he foresees differs from the current situation in degree rather than in kind. Today, for instance, roughly 3 percent of Americans live in extremely affluent gated communities, segregated from the general population by private security. Approximately another 3 percent are employed by the legal system, the police or some form of security company. A further 3 percent are in some sense under the control of the criminal

justice system, whether in prison, on parole or probation (or wanted). Pryor's data suggest that each of these figures is likely to grow exponentially. He is careful not to overstate his case and frequently invokes the limits of "responsible prediction," but his dire prognostications are solidly based on extrapolations from readily observable current trends.



tiny group of wealthy individuals. The market will cease to function, as these giant corporations collaborate to maintain a permanent dominance.

Disillusioned by these developments, people will stop participating in political processes, professional organizations and even in social engagements, retreating to the solitary pleasures of screen

Pryor is neither a demagogue nor an ideologue. His conclusions are drawn from meticulous empirical data and careful research, not inspired by dogma or political predilection. It will thus surprise many to find that his prophecies regarding U.S. capitalism are broadly in agreement with those of Karl Marx. On one crucial point, however, Pryor clearly distinguishes his position:

Unlike Karl Marx, I do not believe that capitalism will collapse, at least from economic causes. Although some of my predictions about the future of the U.S. economy are similar to his—for instance, widening inequality of income, considerable financial volatility and greater concentration of production—I do not foresee a growing discipline and power of the proletariat that he believed so important in forging the ideological orientation needed for a revolution.

It would indeed be hard to conceive of an “ideological orientation” less likely to fall on fertile soil in the future than proletarian socialism. But it is not only revolutionary movements that need coherent “ideological orientations” in order to succeed—dominant powers need them too. U.S. capitalism has historically been supported by an extremely attractive ideology. Even today, most citizens of the United States probably conceive of the economic system as fostering social mobility, rugged individualism, a healthily competitive free market in goods and services, and a democratic independence of external compulsion. There is, of course, a large underclass with no such illusions, but an underclass can easily be repressed. The interesting question is: At what stage will this ideology cease to seem plausible to general public opinion?

In the passage cited above, Pryor suggests that the causes of capitalism’s demise—if there is to be a demise—will not be “economic.” But is capitalism any longer a merely “economic” phenomenon? Pryor points out that the increased leisure time won by the labor movement during the 20th century has been almost entirely diverted into watching television—which is to say, into induced consumption. As consumption becomes more important to the economy than production, leisure turns into labor, and there is

no aspect of life that can be separated from economic concerns. We may appropriately ask whether a system that controls all of our psychological and social lives can any longer be referred to by the narrow term “economy.”

Unlike most economists, Pryor takes account of this question. *The Future of U.S. Capitalism* is an interdisciplinary work, combining data drawn from sociology, politics and environmental sciences with analyses of the economy. It is therefore slightly strange that the book is divided into separate sections dealing with “internal” and “external” influences on the economy, since Pryor’s argument suggests that such distinctions are untenable.

Occasionally this leads him into confusion, as when he declares: “The social impacts of widening income differentials between rich and poor are, I believe, more important to the economic system than the economic impacts.” Obviously, if the

social impacts are more economically important than economic impacts, they are themselves, *ipso facto*, “economic impacts,” and the idea that the “social” and the “economic” constitute different “fields” of experience is obsolete.

In fact, Pryor’s inclusion of psychological, social and political factors in his study suggests that in the future, there will be no area of life that remains uncolonized by the kind of concerns that we currently refer to as “economic.” Given the nature of the economic developments he foresees, this is cause for serious disquiet. Pryor ends his collection of measured, sensible and utterly horrifying predictions with an apologetic murmur “I hope I’m wrong.”

Unfortunately, the evidence he presents in the preceding 400 pages strongly suggests that he is absolutely right. ■

David Hawkes teaches at Lehigh University. His latest book is *Idols of the Marketplace*.

Where’s the Ecstasy?

By A.S. Hamrah

2 *4 Hour Party People* is a biopic-cum-mockumentary about the pretentious, cheesy TV reporter who helped reinvigorate the Manchester rock scene in the late ’70s by recording Joy Division before Ian Curtis, the band’s lead singer and lyricist, committed suicide. The good things in it aren’t great, and sometimes they’re not even interesting. The bad things about it make you more bored than annoyed. Depending on their

24 Hour Party People
Directed by Michael Winterbottom

temperaments and memories, people familiar with the history of music in Manchester from the mid-’70s to the early ’90s will either like or hate *24 Hour Party People*, and their feelings won’t have much to do with the film. Those expecting an ecstasy-drenched look at the origins of rave culture from a movie named after a Happy Mondays song will leave the theater mildly confused.

That’s because director Michael Winterbottom inscribed confusion into

24 Hour Party People when he decided to let his main character’s smarm dominate the film to the exclusion of everything else. Yes, it’s a clever idea. British cinema is very clever. It’s so clever it’s about the cutest national cinema going. The use of Factory Records founder and Granada TV host Tony Wilson (Steve Coogan) as the film’s guiding consciousness is an eccentric choice, a weird conceit. The less cheeky might call it a gimmick.

It’s a gimmick right out of mid-’90s Hollywood, dressed-up in digital video by the great cinematographer Robby Müller to look like the footage he shoots for Lars von Trier. It’s *Forrest Gump* seen through the lens of *Breaking the Waves*. But mostly it’s *Ed Wood* shot in the style of *Natural Born Killers*. The cheap flying saucer and drama-club appearance of God are becoming obligatory in films these days—as is the fat suit, which *24 Hour Party People* also has in stock. Winterbottom’s movie is almost a satire of these various techniques and ideas about humanity, almost a burlesque on vulgar postmodernism. In the end it succumbs to its style, but underneath the

movie's mix of mediated truths and ultra-mediated falsehoods there's a nice portrait of a beautiful loser, a marmalade man in a Marmite world.

Why Winterbottom used such recently cutting-edge means to get to that end shows the poverty of intention now endemic in allegedly hip non-Hollywood product. Winterbottom's (and screenwriter Frank Boyce's) collection of stylistic tics is really a bait-and-switch used to undercut the movie's themes as it under-

cuts that's all the movie comes to. Look at this guy, it says, he spent £30,000 on a table for his office and didn't even own the rights to "Blue Monday." Can you believe it? I mean, is this guy a wanker and a twat, or what?

The idea that human beings lack dignity is one semi-serious contemporary filmmakers are awfully fond of, which is understandable when you consider what it takes to make a feature film today. The real Tony Wilson, along with a gang of Manchester musicians like The Fall's Mark E. Smith and Magazine's

notch? Is the fact that English rock musicians are self-indulgent a revelation? Does Winterbottom have an ecstasy hangover, and can only feel better if he convinces us the Manchester scene was 20 years of boredom? The Buzzcocks said that before the whole thing even happened. When Ian Curtis hanged himself in 1980, surely he had an inkling.

After Curtis' indifferently dedramatized suicide, the emotional climax of the film, we see a Happy Mondays video being rehearsed. Little children dance around aimlessly in a parody of the ravers at Wilson's Hacienda nightclub. Joy Division is forgotten and replaced by entertainment for a youth culture more interested in bliss than in what Wilson is mocked for calling anomie and urban decay. It's like the way *Star Wars* is enacted as children's theater for the post-apocalyptic kiddies in *Reign of Fire*. That's what *Star Wars* was always for. No wonder it's aesthetic permeates rave culture.

Well, Tony Wilson might say the same thing. The TV segments he reports—on a duck herding sheep or a show-biz midget washing an elephant—are direct metaphors for how Wilson wasn't up to the task at hand, being a label honcho and a scene creator. When he throws around words like "semiotic" and "indie" (was that word in use in the early '80s?), we're supposed to think he's a pseud, a guy all too willing to tell us he went to Cambridge. Yet Winterbottom fully indulges his commentary, knowing it's the only thing in his movie he has let live.

At one point Coogan's Wilson comes on screen to archly tell us the pigeons killed in the previous scene weren't really killed, since that's not allowed. The pigeons looked fake anyway, another parody of how movies are done, another recapitulation of how we're now supposed to be awed by Ed Wood when he's done by Sam Raimi or somebody. It's not just *24 Hour Party People*'s look that's dated. But like Robert Evans in *The Kid Stays in the Picture*, *24 Hour Party People* will probably age well anyway. Irony, even irony as facile as this, has had its day, we're told, but smarmy is forever. ■

A.S. Hamrah is co-editor of *Hermenaut*.



How does a film about the legendary Manchester music scene turn into a business school lesson in contract law?

lines them. In *24 Hour Party People*'s first scene, Coogan's Tony Wilson is already twisting in the wind, tangled in a grounded hang glider, mouthing pseudocommentary about Icarus. That's where the film leaves him for 115 minutes. Some viewers will laugh with the actor and the filmmakers—and at Wilson.

Others will ask: Why bother? Winterbottom presents Wilson as a jerk from the get-go, a striver who's heard of the Situationists. By the end, when Wilson's put-on idealism has prevented him from selling out whether he wants to or not, the film asks us to smirk at how he blew it, as if this were a business school lesson in contract law. Despite its attitude of what we might as well call meta-postmodernism,

Howard Devoto, make cameo appearances in *24 Hour Party People*. Their presence is ghostly and sad, like Buster Keaton's in *Sunset Blvd.* Because they're stuck into the margins of the film, they show up as has-beens, no matter their achievements. And as Coogan points them out on screen, we witness the further invasion of the credits into the body of the film.

The music The Fall recorded during the period the film covers will last a lot longer than this movie will linger in the memory. Winterbottom's debunking effort is slight, his joyless party's studied drear tired. Was the mad, mad Madchester music scene really something that needed to be taken down a

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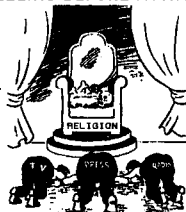
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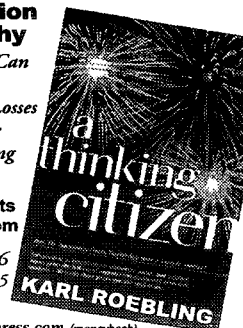
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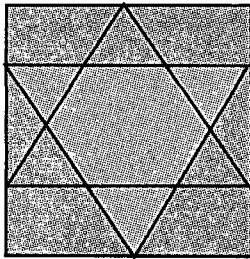
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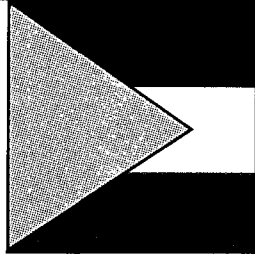




At one nightclub in Jerusalem

Yet despite the checkpoints, many take the trouble to get to Laila's anyway. "Palestinians feel good to come here because they don't get harassed," says club owner Avi Specter, a Jew from Germany who immigrated six years ago. Specter and his wife, Ann Marie, opened the place because he has "many gay friends in Europe who complained when they visited Israel that there are no gay bars in the city. It was our idea to make this place for all kinds of people."

there is no
intifada and
no occupation



The first ever Jerusalem Gay Pride Parade took place last June, attended by more than 4,000 people. Despite threats of attacks by ultra-Orthodox Jews, who opposed having a gay celebration in the holy city, the event highlighted the connection between Jewish and Arab gays and the occupation of the Palestinian Territories—even though very few Arabs showed up. Yasser, 31, a father of three from the Old City, explains why: "The Arabs are scared of being filmed on TV and being seen. Our families don't know we are gay and that we are here."

A group of 50 women and men wore black shirts with pink writing in Arabic and Hebrew that said "Black Laundry against the occupation, in favor of social justice." Founded in Tel Aviv last year, "Black Laundry" members directly connect their sexual tendencies with their fight for Palestinian freedom.

"We protest against the festive nature of the pride parade [because they're] doing it while the occupation is going on. Pride is a political thing. We can't celebrate our freedom while other groups are oppressed," explains Gali, 22, a lesbian from Tel Aviv wearing the Black Laundry shirt and fishnet stockings.

After almost 2 years of bitter fighting, trust between Israelis and Palestinians has never been lower. But in a packed, smoky nightclub on the edge of Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim district, the gay communities from both sides still bridge the growing divide, breaking down racial and political barriers as Jews and Arabs defy traditional stereotypes and threats of suicide bombers.

While tensions are high in the rest of the country, Laila's remains the only nightclub where Israeli Jews clap enthusiastically side by side with Palestinian Arabs. Does the fact that these revelers are gay, lesbian or bisexual have anything to do with their mutual tolerance? Absolutely.

"Here we don't care where you are from or who you are, Jew or Arab. That's what characterizes the gay world," says Johnny, a Christian Palestinian Arab from East Jerusalem wearing a tight white shirt and stylish jeans as a Jewish friend greets him with a kiss.

"I have 10 children," says Simo, an ultra-orthodox Jew wearing a black suit and yarmulke, as he pulls out photos to show Johnny and Amir, the Arabs sitting near the bar with him. "I raise them to believe that all people are the same."

"No one is prejudiced, you feel very free here," says Rotem, a 19-year-old Israeli. Simo agrees: "As a religious man ... I feel more comfortable to come to this place than to go to a straight place. I love my wife, but I do have a slight attraction to men." Despite his attraction, Simo admits, "I'm scared to realize my fantasy of being with one."

Simo, Johnny, Amir and Rotem sit together in the hot dark nightclub talking about their belief in God as Kylie Minogue blares in the background. "I used to be religious," says Amir, who has a goatee and wears a tight red shirt. "I prayed five times a day at the Dome of the Rock mosque. I tried for two years to be religious [and not gay], but it was a waste of time. I'm proud to be gay and have been for the last 10 years. This is the way God made me."

But the political reality outside Laila's divides these four. Because of severe Israeli security measures, Palestinians are having increasing difficulty coming to downtown Jerusalem, where Laila's and the Open House, a gay support center, are located. Even those from East Jerusalem, who are considered "permanent residents" of Israel, have trouble passing the newly erected military checkpoints on their side of the city.



Isn't That Queer

By Orly Halpern

Anat, a 27-year-old lesbian from Tel Aviv and a founder of Black Laundry, adds: "There is a connection between our oppression as lesbians, homosexuals and the oppression of the Palestinians. Since the *intifada*, the city of Jerusalem is covered with posters and graffiti saying 'Expel the Arabs.' Yesterday the city was covered with graffiti saying 'Expel the homosexuals.' I don't want this [parade] to be a fig leaf for the abuses of human rights. A few kilometers from here there are people under siege, people who are hungry." ■